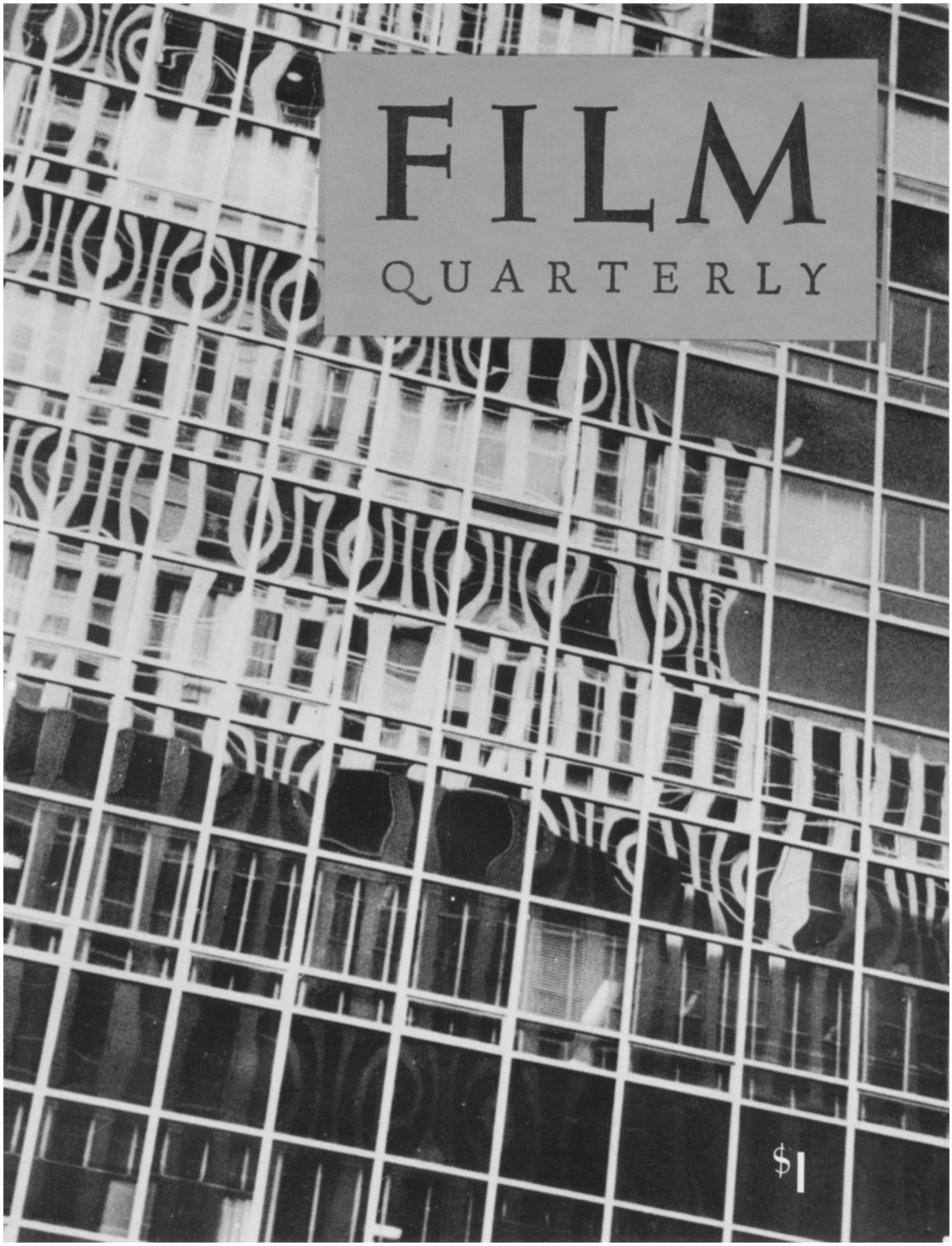
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Editor's Notebook

An American film journal nowadays finds itself rather in the position that British film journals occupied for many years: one of reluctantly devoting a large portion of its space to foreign films. In this issue we redress the balance somewhat with reviews of some American short films of importance and a discussion of distribution problems that are crucial to the future of independent American film-making; in the next issue we will cover another group of young independent Hollywood directors, and review such films as *Private Property*.

It may be a good thing that the notion of "an American new wave" has lately received publicity in the national press; thus may be created the public idea that cinema can be a matter of excitement—even if promoted excitement or, as in the case of the French new wave, somewhat misleading excitement. Certainly, even in the limited sense in which the French developments have constituted a "movement" (many of the directors wrote for *Cahiers du Cinéma* and share a certain moral and technical —or perhaps antitechnical—outlook) we do not as yet have a new-film movement in this country. But there are many encouraging stirrings, in this as in other areas of the national life—as if people have finally become a little joyfully desperate and are insisting on taking their own gambles. The new film-makers are spread all over the country: some in Hollywood, some in New York, some in outlying parts. They make films in a great variety of styles and with a great variety of intentions; their only link is that they reject the conventional Hollywood product as having nothing to do with the potential art of the film, just as a story in the *Saturday Evening Post* has nothing to do with literature.

This is a beginning.

But what must come next if we *are* to have an "American new wave"?

First, no doubt, a sense on the part of the film-makers that there is an intelligent audience that will pay serious attention to new kinds of films—that will not be put off by a lack of technical gloss; that will encourage or at least not resent an honest confrontation of American life, in the most candid and subtle manner the film-makers can manage; that will have an eye for the new and the hard and the unpleasant. (Film, like other art forms, is likely to be moribund if it is always "pleasing.")

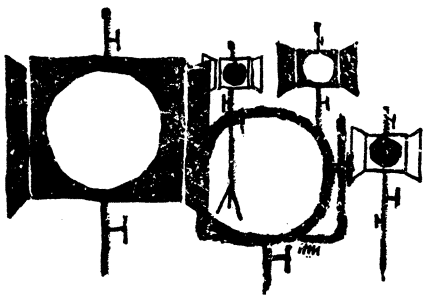
Over the past ten years or so, such an audience seems to have been developing—through the work of film societies, specialist magazines like *Sight & Sound*, enterprises like Cinema 16 in New York, museums, universities, and so on. It must now make itself felt.

Second, new kinds of machinery for distributing films to this audience and recouping the costs of the films. A "new wave" might of course for a time insinuate itself into the commercial machine, with profit and good times for all over a brief period, given the good luck and publicity attendant upon the French version. However, if the upshot here turned out to be the same as there, with the new film-makers quickly swallowed up by the industry, it would be a sad thing indeed. We need, in other words, a continuing, stable situation through which personal, low-budget films that, to the general public, often seem "amoral" and sometimes "subversive" can be produced and financed.

Third, some small seminal sources of finance. Many of the French new-wave directors have access to family money; Stanley Kubrick, in this country, started out on the same basis. Lacking such accidental advantages, the aspiring American film-maker needs new sources of small-scale finance. Under the present dispensation, the only area from which this might come seems to be the personal sponsorship of the rich who may be persuaded into arrangements that sometimes prove philanthropic but sometimes also immensely profitable.

Fourth, a conviction among the film-makers that their films must "meet the reality of the country." This does not mean sociological abstraction in the manner of documentary in the thirties (for life is lived in small bits). It means

a patient exploration of the human condition as we know it (this human condition, here and now, dehumanized as it may often be, is the only one we *know*, and can draw artistic strength from). Pompous though it sounds, it remains true that only by submergence in life can art transcend life. And for this arduous and harrowing work our film-makers need all the encouragement we can given them: they must descend, as Orwell might nowadays put it, into the lower intestine of the whale.



CLASSIFIED SECTION

About Our Contributors

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VERNON YOUNG has been living in Europe for several years, much of the time in Stockholm. He contributes film criticism to the *Hudson Review* and is writing a general critical study of the film, *The Witness Point*.

ANDRÉ BAZIN

The Ontology of the Photographic Image

TRANSLATED BY HUGH GRAY

Before his untimely death in 1958 André Bazin began to review and select for publication his post–World War II writings on the cinema. Of the planned four volumes, one was published in 1958, and a second in 1959; the remainder await some competent selective hand. The first volume centers on the theme of the ontological basis of cinema or, as Bazin also puts it, "in less philosophical terms: the cinema as the art of reality." The second discusses the relations between the cinema and those arts with which it has things in common—the theater, the novel, and painting. A third volume was to have discussed the relations of cinema and society; the fourth would have dealt with neorealism. What follows is a translation of the first chapter of volume one. To those not yet familiar with the writings of a man who might be described with justice as the Sainte-Beuve of film criticism, it should serve to reveal the informed clarity and perceptiveness of his mind, shining through the inevitable awkwardnesses and compressions of writing under pressure as a jouranlist. It is difficult to estimate fully, as yet, the loss to the cinema of a man who was counsellor as well as critic.

If the plastic arts were put under psychoanalysis, the practice of embalming the dead might turn out to be a fundamental factor in their creation. The process might reveal that at the origin of painting and sculpture there lies a mummy complex. The religion of ancient Egypt, aimed against death, saw survival as depending on the continued existence of the corporeal body. Thus, by providing a defense against the passage of time it satisfied a basic psychological need in man, for death is but the victory of time. To preserve, artificially, his bodily appearance is to snatch it from the flow of time, to stow it away neatly, so to speak, in

the hold of life. It was natural, therefore, to keep up appearances in the face of the reality of death by preserving flesh and bone. The first Egyptian statue, then, was a mummy, tanned and petrified in sodium. But pyramids and labyrinthine corridors offered no certain guarantee against ultimate pillage.

Other forms of insurance were therefore sought. So, near the sarcophagus, alongside the corn that was to feed the dead, the Egyptians placed terra cotta statuettes, as substitute mummies which might replace the bodies if these were destroyed. It is this religous use, then, that lays bare the primordial function of statuary, namely, the preservation of life by a representation of life. Another manifestation of

the same kind of thing is the arrow-pierced clay bear to be found in prehistoric caves, a magic identity-substitute for the living animal, that will ensure a successful hunt. The evolution, side by side, of art and civilization has relieved the plastic arts of their magic role. Louis XIV did not have himself embalmed. He was content to survive in his portrait by Lebrun. Civilization cannot, however, entirely cast out the bogy of time. It can only sublimate our concern with it to the level of rational thinking. No one believes any longer in the ontological identity of model and image, but all are agreed that the image helps us to remember the subject and to preserve him from a second spiritual death. Today the making of images no longer shares an anthropocentric, utilitarian purpose. It is no longer a question of survival after death, but of a larger concept, the creation of an ideal world in the likeness of the real, with its own temporal destiny. "How vain a thing is painting" if underneath our fond admiration for its works we do not discern man's primitive need to have the last word in the argument with death by means of the form that endures. If the history of the plastic arts is less a matter of their aesthetic than of their psychology then it will be seen to be essentially the story of resemblance, or, if you will, of realism.

Seen in this sociological perspective photography and cinema would provide a natural explanation for the great spiritual and technical crisis that overtook modern painting around the middle of the last century. André Malraux has described the cinema as the furthermost evolution to date of plastic realism, the beginnings of which were first manifest at the Renaissance and which found a limited expression in baroque painting.

It is true that painting, the world over, has struck a varied balance between the symbolic and realism. However, in the fifteenth century Western painting began to turn from its age-old concern with spiritual realities expressed in the form proper to it, towards an effort to combine this spiritual expression with as complete an imitation as possible of the outside world.

The decisive moment undoubtedly came with the discovery of the first scientific and already, in a sense, mechanical system of reproduction, namely, perspective: the camera obscura of Da Vinci foreshadowed the camera of Niepce. The artist was now in a position to create the illusion of three-dimensional space within which things appeared to exist as our eyes in reality see them.

Thenceforth painting was torn between two ambitions: one, primarily aesthetic, namely the expression of spiritual reality wherein the symbol transcended its model; the other, purely psychological, namely to duplicate the world outside. The satisfaction of this appetite for illusion merely served to increase it till, bit by bit, it consumed the plastic arts. However, since perspective had only solved the problem of form and not of movement, realism was forced to continue the search for some way of giving dramatic expression to the moment, a kind of psychic fourth dimension that could suggest life in the tortured immobility of baroque art.*

The great artists, of course, have always been able to combine the two tendencies. They have alloted to each its proper place in the hierarchy of things, holding reality at their command and molding it at will into the fabric of their art. Nevertheless, the fact remains that we are faced with two essentially different phenomena and these any objective critic must view separately if he is to understand the evolution of the pictorial. The need for illusion has not ceased to trouble the heart of painting since the sixteenth century. It is a purely mental need, of itself nonaesthetic, the origins of which must be sought in the proclivity of the mind towards magic. However, it is a need the pull of which has been strong enough to have seriously upset the equilibrium of the plastic arts.

* It would be interesting, from this point of view, to study in the illustrated magazines of 1890–1910, the rivalry between photographic reporting and the use of drawings. The latter, in particular, satisfied the baroque need for the dramatic. A feeling for the photographic document developed only gradually.

The quarrel over realism in art stems from a misunderstanding, from a confusion between the aesthetic and the psychological; between true realism, the need that is to give significant expression to the world both concretely and in its essence, and the pseudorealism of a deception aimed at fooling the eye (or for that matter the mind); a pseudorealism content in other words with illusory appearances.* That is why medieval art never passed through this crisis; simultaneously vividly realistic and highly spiritual, it knew nothing of the drama that came to light as a consequence of technical developments. Perspective was the original sin of Western painting.

It was redeemed from sin by Niepce and Lumière. In achieving the aims of baroque art, photography has freed the plastic arts from their obsession with likeness. Painting was forced, as it turned out, to offer us illusion and this illusion was reckoned sufficient unto art. Photography and the cinema on the other hand are discoveries that satisfy, once and for all and in its very essence, our obsession with realism.

No matter how skillful the painter, his work was always in fee to an inescapable subjectivity. The fact that a human hand intervened cast a shadow of doubt over the image. Again, the essential factor in the transition from the baroque to photography is not the perfecting of a physical process (photography will long remain the inferior of painting in the reproduction of color); rather does it lie in a psychological fact, to wit, in completely satisfying our appetite for illusion by a mechanical reproduction in the making of which man plays no part. The solution is not to be found in the result achieved but in the way of achieving it.†

This is why the conflict between style and likeness is a relatively modern phenomenon of which there is no trace before the invention of the sensitized plate. Clearly the fascinating objectivity of Chardin is in no sense that of the photographer. The nineteenth century saw the real beginnings of the crisis of realism of which Picasso is now the mythical central figure and which put to the test at one and the same time the conditions determining the formal existence of the plastic arts and their sociological roots. Freed from the "resemblance complex," the modern painter abandons it to the masses who, henceforth, identify resemblance on the one hand with photography and on the other with the kind of painting which is related to photography.

Originality in photography as distinct from originality in painting lies in the essentially objective character of photography. [Bazin here makes a point of the fact that the lens, the basis of photography, is in French called the "objectif," a nuance that is lost in English.–Tr.] For the first time, between the originating object and its reproduction there intervenes only the instrumentality of a nonliving agent. For the first time an image of the world is formed automatically, without the creative intervention of man. The personality of the photographer enters into the proceedings only in his selection of the object to be photographed and by way of the purpose he has in mind. Although the final result may reflect something of his personality, this does not play the same role as is played by that of the painter. All the arts are based on the presence of man, only photography derives an advantage from his absence. Photography affects us like a phenomenon in nature, like a flower or a snowflake whose vegetable or earthly origins are an inseparable part of their beauty.

This production by automatic means has radically affected our psychology of the image. The objective nature of photography confers on it a

* Perhaps the Communists, before they attach too much importance to expressionist realism, should stop talking about it in a way more suitable to the eighteenth century, before there were such things as photography or cinema. Maybe it does not really matter if Russian painting is second-rate provided she gives us first-rate cinema. Eisenstein is her Tintoretto.

† There is room, nevertheless, for a study of the psychology of the lesser plastic arts, the molding of death masks, for example, which likewise involves a certain automatic process. One might consider photography, in this sense as a molding, the taking of an impression, by the manipulation of light.

quality of credibility absent from all other picture-making. In spite of any objections our critical spirit may offer, we are forced to accept as real the existence of the object reproduced, actually *re*-presented, set before us, that is to say, in time and space. Photography enjoys a certain advantage in virtue of this transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction.*

A very faithful drawing may actually tell us more about the model but despite the promptings of our critical intelligence it will never have the irrational power of the photograph to bear away our faith.

Besides, painting is, after all, an inferior way of making likenesses, an *ersatz* of the processes of reproduction. Only a photographic lens can give us the kind of image of the object that is capable of satisfying the deep need man has to substitute for it something more than a mere approximation, a kind of decal or transfer. The photographic image is the object itself, the object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it. No matter how fuzzy, distorted, or discolored, no matter how lacking, in documentary value the image may be, it shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it *is* the model.

Hence the charm of family albums. Those grey or sepia shadows, phantomlike and almost undecipherable, are no longer traditional family portraits but rather the disturbing presence of lives halted at a set moment in their duration, freed from their destiny; not, however, by the prestige of art but by the power of an impassive mechanical process: for photography does not create eternity, as art does, it embalms time, rescuing it simply from its proper corruption.

Viewed in this perspective, the cinema is objectivity in time. The film is no longer content to preserve the object, enshrouded as it were in an instant, as the bodies of insects are preserved intact, out of the distant past, in amber. The film delivers baroque art from its convulsive catalepsy. Now, for the first time, the image of things is likewise the image of their duration, change mummified as it were. Those categories of *resemblance* which determine the species *photographic image* likewise, then, determine the character of its aesthetic as distinct from that of painting.†

The aesthetic qualities of photography are to be sought in its power to lay bare the realities. It is not for me to separate off, in the complex fabric of the objective world, here a reflexion on a damp sidewalk, there the gesture of a child. Only the impassive lens, stripping its object of all those ways of seeing it, those piled-up preconceptions, that spiritual dust and grime with which my eyes have covered it, are able to present it in all its virginal purity to my attention and consequently to my love. By the power of photography, the natural image of a world that we neither know nor can know, nature at last does more than imitate art: she imitates the artist.

Photography can even surpass art in creative power. The aesthetic world of the painter is of a different kind from that of the world about him. Its boundaries enclose a substantially and essentially different microcosm. The photograph as such and the object in itself share a common being, after the fashion of a fingerprint. Wherefore, photography actually contributes something to the order of natural creation instead of providing a substitute for it. The surrealists had an inkling of this when they looked to the photographic plate to provide them with their monstrosities and for this reason. The surrealist does not consider his aesthetic purpose and the

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* Here one should really examine the psychology of relics and souvenirs which likewise enjoy the advantages of a transfer of reality stemming from the "mummy-complex." Let us merely note in passing that the Holy Shroud of Turin combines the features alike of relic and photograph.

† I use the term *category* here in the sense attached to it by M. Gouhier in his book on the theater in which he distinguishes between the dramatic and the aesthetic categories. Just as dramatic tension has no artistic value, the perfection of a reproduction is not to be identified with beauty. It constitutes rather the prime matter, so to speak, on which the artistic fact is recorded.

mechanical effect of the image on our imaginations as things apart. For him, the logical distinction between what is imaginary and what is real tends to disappear. Every image is to be seen as an object and every object as an image. Hence photography ranks high in the order of surrealist creativity because it produces an image that is a reality of nature, namely, an hallucination that is also a fact. The fact that surrealist painting combines tricks of visual deception with meticulous attention to detail substantiates this.

So, photography is clearly the most important event in the history of the plastic arts. Simultaneously a liberation and an accomplishment, it has freed Western painting, once and for all, from its obsession with realism and allowed it to recover its aesthetic autonomy. Impressionist realism, offering science as an alibi, is at the opposite extreme from eye-deceiving trickery. Only when form ceases to have any imitative value can it be swallowed up in color. So, when form, in the person of Cézanne, once more regains possession of the canvas there is no longer any question of the illusions of the geometry of perspective. The painting, being confronted in the mechanically produced image with a competitor able to reach out beyond baroque resemblance to the very identity of the model, was compelled into the category of object. Henceforth Pascal's condemnation of painting is itself rendered vain since the photograph allows us on the one hand to admire in reproduction something that our eyes alone could not have taught us to love, and on the other, to admire the painting as a thing in itself whose relation to something in nature has ceased to be the justification for its existence.

On the other hand, of course, cinema is also a language.

New Periodicals

Definition: Quarterly Journal of Film Criticism. 33 Electric Avenue, London S.W.9, England. 2s. 6d. A new journal edited by former students and staff members of the London School of Film Technique, aiming at a more responsible "new criticism" of films. The editors note that since Lindsay Anderson's famous article, "Stand Up! Stand Up!" in *Sight & Sound* three years ago, "the cry has been repeated, the thesis elaborated and the case restated with increasing showmanship; so that those who began as isolated prophets can now find reward in the satisfactions of preaching to the converted. But criticism has not noticeably changed."

The first issue contains "Towards a Theory," by Dai Vaughan, who points out that "*any* criticism assumes an aesthetic, even though this aesthetic may not be made conscious or explicit," and suggests certain basic lines for a committed aesthetic theory. Stuart Hall compares *Look Back in Anger* and *Room at the Top* in what is probably the best piece yet done on these films. Mr. Vaughan also contributes "Complacent Rebel" on Robert Flaherty, and the issue includes as well an interview with François Truffaut by Fernando Lopes, pieces on film schools by David Naden and Boleslaw Sulik, a curious pair of notes for and on films by John Irvin, and "Two Lost Generations?" by Arnold Wesker. We hope that *Definition* survives the economic perils of a new independent magazine.

For Film is the publication of the rejuvenated American Federation of Film Societies, Box 2607, Grand Central Station, New York 17, N.Y. Founded in 1955, the AFFS is a nonprofit organization with the basic aim of assisting existing film societies and encouraging the formation of new ones. The first issue of *For Film*, which is the successor to the *AFFS Newsletter*, contains an editorial by Gideon Bachmann, new AFFS President, notes on films newly available for film societies, several book reviews, an interview with Rod Steiger, and news notes of various kinds. To be published approximately four times a year; $1.00 a year.

COLIN YOUNG

Tony Richardson: An Interview in Los Angeles

The novels and plays of the "new wave" of young nonconformist, anti-Establishment English writers have been providing literary and drama critics on both sides of the Atlantic with a large share of their copy in the last two or three years. It was only a matter of time before some of the original material found its way onto the screen. The Boulting Brothers made a rather hapless version of Kingsley Amis' novel Lucky Jim, *and Jack Clayton chose* Room at the Top *(from John Braine's novel) as his first feature film; but the name most firmly associated with the new writers as sponsor, theater producer, and finally film producer and director is that of Tony Richardson, himself a young man in his thirties.*

Before he was taken on by George Devine, artistic director of the Royal Court Theatre, Tony Richardson had been noticed for a production of a Chekhov one-act on English television and various one-night stand Sunday Night shows in theaters off the West End. At that time John Osborne was an unknown and largely unwanted writer. His play, Look Back in Anger, *had been turned down by several London theatrical companies when it came to Richardson's attention; its success established Osborne and Richardson in the London theater, and soon they formed a company (Woodfall) to produce the films of their choice. The first two were from Osborne's plays,* Look Back *to be followed by* The Entertainer. *Although he is not yet the sole author of his own material, Richardson's films are peopled by the disenchanted, who are yet treated sympathetically, as if they were important: he obviously thinks they are.*

A few weeks ago Mr. Richardson came to Hollywood at the invitation of Richard Zanuck of Twentieth Century–Fox to discuss the latter's suggestion that he film Sanctuary*–based on Faulkner's novel and also on his play* Requiem for a Nun. *It was subsequently announced that he had postponed the production of* A Taste of Honey *in England in favor of the Faulkner project.*

The following interview took place rather hurriedly between other appointments. The resultant bias of the conversation (which is here condensed) toward financial rather than artistic matters was in large part accidental, and it is hoped that Mr. Richardson will have other opportunities to declare himself in the near future, perhaps when the later films of which he speaks below have been seen in this country.

–C. Y.

How does it come about that the films you direct and produce all happen to be contemporary subjects?

The sort of films I will always want to make will be this kind, about the world we are living in, films that are part of that world, and I think this is the sort of thing the film does best. So far it has been possible to finance these films–although there will always come a time when one can't, but so far we have been very lucky. *The Entertainer,* my latest, is completely finished–I've just in fact slightly re-edited it, and redubbed one reel. Walter Reed will release it, same people who released *Room at the Top*

Tony Richardson and Dame Edith Evans during the shooting of LOOK BACK IN ANGER.

here. British Lion will release it in Britain. *Entertainer* was financed quite differently than *Look Back in Anger*. The earlier picture was financed completely by A.B.C. which is a subsidiary of Warners, who also put up some money for Richard Burton. *The Entertainer* was partly financed by Bryanston (a subsidiary of British Lion), partly by Walter Reed, and partly by the National Film Finance Corporation, all quite independent of any major company. Until recently, Harry Saltzman was associated with me and John Osborne in the company which has produced all my films—Woodfall. Bryanston has a more or less permanent arrangement with Walter Reed, who puts up about 25 per cent of the budget in return for the American rights.

Look Back in Anger was made for about £250,000, *The Entertainer* cost just over £200,000, while the last film we made, *Saturday Night, Sunday Morning* (book by Alan Sillitoe, directed by Karel Reisz) cost £117,000. *Look Back* was more expensive—because the property was much more expensive, and so was the cast. Richard Burton is a very expensive actor; all the cast was expensive—none of them were on deferment of salary, and there were undoubtedly more studio overheads. (It was shot at Elstree.) In *The Entertainer*, Olivier, Osborne, and myself all took deferments and although it is a much more ambitious picture it was made more cheaply. Deferments of services or of the actual property are quite common in England now.

In England it is impossible, of course, to finance a film except through a distributor. The whole business of financing is difficult, perhaps more so in England than anywhere else in the world, because England is trying to live up to a scale of production which is quite unreal for so small a country. Films ought to cost the sort of money that they cost in France, but in fact England has half been caught up in an American tradition, and although their films of course do not cost as much as here, they still cost far too much, for the size of the country, and for the amount that they can take back. It ought

to be possible to make a film, and especially the sort of film that I want to make, for about 30 or 50 thousand pounds, as you can in France. But with the present financial and union setup it is quite hopeless. All my films cost too much money.

Can you explain the role of the unions? Is it exactly the same as here?

No—but the industry in Britain *is* heavily unionized and it is not possible to operate with such a small group as is used, say, in the new-wave French films. But it isn't only a question of the unions—there are charges imposed on the producer in England which in America are laid against the distributor, such as the bank interest, which in the case of one of my films amounts to many thousands of pounds.

In Britain you can't do a film outside the unions—nor would it be desirable to do so, because after all you have to have professional people working in every department. I don't want to sound antiunion, because I believe in unions, yet it is necessary to concede that they are at present conceived in a way that is perhaps not right for a certain kind of small, unambitious film. And the union is the only source of technicians who can do professional work. There are no other sources, as in America, from the universities and so on. If I did not go to the union I would have no idea of who could photograph a picture . . . even Walter Lassally is a member of the union.

However, in the end, I have no desire to work outside the union—it is just that we could wish them at times to be a little more imaginative. But much more serious is the general system of financing and distribution . . .

The whole tone of the picture business is to strive for technical perfection, but we all know this doesn't matter a tiny damn—the thing can be appalling in many ways technically and yet still be a wonderful and marvellous film. Gloss guarantees nothing . . . whereas the cost of technical perfection hampers the film industry.

We are going to shoot *Taste of Honey* entirely on location. This is something I've wanted to do for a long long time . . . and all the technicians in the unit also want to do this. I have a team of technicians now who want to work in this way, and we are going to try to work with a minimum unit. We shall end up with a crew of about 50: you need four on camera, any night exteriors require a lighting crew, and in fact to work efficiently you have got to have a certain amount of lighting during day scenes also, and this all involves generators. Then you have the art department, assistant directors, make-up and hair and wardrobe, production people and accountants—reducing it to the minimum it is about 50. Reducing it beyond this makes for an inefficient operation.

. . . There is a scene in Jean Luc Godard's *A Bout de Souffle* which goes on for twenty minutes, shot in a real room and the setups are obviously very clumsy and awkward, and people have to climb over furniture to get any sort of shots at all . . . but nevertheless, *this helps* the film. The thing I don't like about it is the final sort of gesture the film makes . . . under its cloak of contemporary French cynicism—the contemporary French shrug. But I also don't think you can go out and make movies with six people. Even in a unit of 50, there would be no one not doing more than one man's job.

Taste of Honey will be shot three weeks in Manchester and five in London . . . the action no longer is confined to the one house of the play. Shelagh Delaney and I have done the script. The man who did the script of *Look Back* did a first draft of *The Entertainer,* then John and I went away and rewrote it.

The Entertainer was shot six weeks on location, and two in the studio. Only the apartment scenes were shot in the studio. I hate studios. I no longer want to shoot even interiors in a studio, I would rather work in the limited conditions which a location imposes upon you. For the sort of realistic films I want to make, by improvising one's way out of the impossibilities of real conditions you get something on the screen that is more true, somehow, than something contrived on a set. It is a question of taste—you can't get back and shoot long shots of rooms—you're on top of the people in rooms, you can't do a lot of camera movement, which isn't a thing I am terribly interested in. I think

a real set forces you to come to a simple sort of relationship with the people, to make a direct statement with the camera more than anything else . . . more than you do in studios. For once inside a studio you start taking walls out, you start thinking "Wouldn't it be fun if we tracked from here to there, pan round there?" and—you know—do a lot of fancy stuff. One is getting in fact less of the human reality.

Apart from two sets, *The Entertainer* was completely shot on location. The sets were treated differently in *The Entertainer* than in *Look Back*. In *Look Back* the set, the apartment, was built for the action. I think it worked —it was utterly unlike the reality of the room. In *The Entertainer,* I tried to set the thing in an absolutely real room, exactly as the room would be, but I don't think it's as good. I think once you start going into a studio you have to build a completely different sort of set. But anyway, all the scenes in the apartment of *The Entertainer* were very difficult because they are essentially quartet or quintet scenes, which were really written in the theatrical convention—difficult to do on the screen. However, the movie as a whole is very unlike the play. For instance, the music hall episodes served a different function in the play—they commented in an almost Brechtian fashion on the play. Although they were also almost realistic music hall numbers, Archie Rice was also commenting on his own situation—and with all sorts of political and social references. The minute you put him in a real place everything changes. The theater can have this kind of juxtaposition—this is one of the great advantages of the theater. And this is why it is so difficult to translate an Osborne play to the screen, and why I think filmed plays are so impossible. In the theater you can do these things which are suggestive and atmospheric, it's like double time in Shakespeare. In *Othello,* you can give the impression of Othello's being jealous for six weeks whereas in fact he's only been there a day. Now movies are specific and particular, and exist in a place and a time, so that Archie Rice becomes a character existing at a specific seaside town, doing particular numbers; the numbers can no longer have this

LOOK BACK IN ANGER: *Mary Ure, Richard Burton, and Claire Bloom in the specially built set.*

double significance—they are just the sort of numbers that this dead-beat, third-rate music hall artist would have. And you have to suggest the other values in a different way.

We do it through his character—we get closer to his character, and implicit in it are all sorts of gestures and attitudes. But they are not externalized in the way they were in the theater.

I started with *Look Back* and *The Entertainer* because I happened to have directed the plays on stage, and I knew the subjects, and it became possible to use these as a means of starting making films. I never, ever, want to make a film of a play I have staged again. I think the two media work in a completely different way, and once materials, stories, characters, subjects are put in a particular mold, however much you try to translate them into a different mold they are still a bit stuck as they were—though I think *The Entertainer* is much less so than *Look Back*. This is why I'm glad to be doing *Taste of Honey* because I have *not* worked with it on the stage. Once you've actually staged a play, you have your favorite bits and you know how they work, and if you're doing it with the same actors, they have *their* bits, so that it's even worse.

Alan Sillitoe's novel *Saturday Night, Sunday Morning* had a limited success in England—it wasn't a best-seller, but it earned the critics' esteem. I think novels are fine for films—it's only plays that I think are difficult.

The *City of Spades* project (on which Gavin Lambert was invited to do the screenplay) will not be done for a while. After *Taste of Honey*, John Osborne's writing a film script, Arnold Wesker (author of *Roots*, one part of a trilogy running now in the Royal Court Theater) has written one; another man, an American called Clancy Segal who has just written a book, has written a film script for me. I'll do one of those —I'm not sure which. I want to do an original script more than anything. There is really no shortage of ideas—I also want to do a film on India—a four-hour epic sort of film—the freeing of India from the British. It will take me about four years to get the material together for it—work has just started. I want to cover from 1911 on—the political evolution of the country. It's such a marvellous subject, because its references are so enormous; it's just about the only successful meeting of East and West, where people have got together, and in spite of the things that went wrong, the horrors and enormities that were permitted, nevertheless, in the end something very valuable was hammered out. The subject is the sort of big-scale historical thing which I think we are close enough to to be able to tackle.

You have said that you have a personal interest in the contemporary subject. You have also managed to finance one or two of these. Since no one else seems to do much of that, are we to assume that not many other people share your interest?

I think that's true—you see a very extraordinary thing has happened, in England. Everyone is writing *plays*—all the young creative talent is directed at the theater. There are at least 20 interesting playwrights in England at various stages of development, who have written one or more good plays, or maybe plays that aren't quite successful yet but obviously will write a good play—similar to this wave of directors in France who want to make films, whereas there's no one writing plays in France of any value under about 50—the generation of French theater is Sartre, Anouilh, Beckett, and so on, just as there has been no significant original writing in America in the theater since Williams and Arthur Miller, which is, you know, about 20 years old. You can't really define these cultural breakthroughs—but when one occurs as now in England, then a whole series of people begin to think in this sort of way. It happened with the Elizabethan drama, and although it seems an overwhelming comparison, this same sort of thing has happened in the movies in France and in the theater in England, just as it happened in Russia following the revolution—all sorts of people, in different circumstances, came together to make the movies. I don't think there are many people yet in England who want to make the films I have been speaking of in England, but I think there will be. Film is a director's medium, and I don't think there are

enough directors who want to do this sort of film.

Incidentally, when will we get to see The Entertainer?

It will be released here the end of August. You must also notice *Saturday Night, Sunday Morning,* directed by Karel Reisz. He wanted to do it and had an idea about it, and we set it up for him to do. Albert Finney plays the lead —he's quite marvellous, will be the next great actor. Shirley Enfield (who plays Larry's girl friend in *The Entertainer*), a very talented actress, is also in it, and we have tried to keep a continuity of technical crew as far as possible— the whole unit will continue on *Taste of Honey.* They all have an attitude in common, and work together in a certain way. The theme of the story is, roughly, the release of the week end. It is about a sort of rebel, a sort of anarchist, a sort of anti-authoritarian boy living in this terrible drab ghastly town, who is really against authority, against the Establishment. He sleeps around at the week end, gets drunk, creates wild scenes, and so on. Then he gradually matures, and channels his rebelliousness into a more potent form. He works in a large bicycle factory as a machinist. It's about work—the whole business of work in those towns, the sort of tensions it produces.

CYNTHIA GRENIER

Ill-Starred Thirteenth Festival of Cannes

Faced with the depressing quality of most of the twenty-seven competition films and the generally lack-lustre atmosphere of the Thirteenth Annual International Film Festival held at Cannes May 4–21 this year, one was sorely tempted to believe there was something to the malevolent power that superstition accords the number 13 after all.

There were, of course, a number of first-rate films, but the day by day average of pretentiousness or mediocrity stretching over nearly three weeks was pretty rough on the faithful filmgoer. Boosted in advance by the popular press as having the most scandalous collection of films ever presented in a festival, the actual projection revealed a singularly unappetizing and often downright dreary detailing of sexual vagaries. The range of deviation was unquestionably wide: incest, rape, voyeurism, homosexuality, and seduction of a twelve-year-old. In this context adultery and prostitution appeared rather old hat. Let it not be thought, though, that any of these subjects were treated lightly or that any of the deviations were shown to have an agreeable side: all were seen from a heavily moral viewpoint.

The festival opened and closed with the showing of two long American films, both of which rather spectacularly bored the sophisticated, largely Parisian, audience. *Ben-Hur* for all its Oscars, its millions, and its monumental ballyhoo, provoked many a titter, and at its end won only the barest flutter of polite applause. The final film, *Savage Innocents,* a hybrid entered under Italian colors, directed by American Nicholas Ray, acted by Japanese Yoko Tani and

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Grigori Tchoukhari's
BALLAD FOR A SOLDIER.

American Anthony Quinn, and shot in England and Greenland, was all about Eskimo life, and proved once more that there is no point in trying to depict a primitive society using highly civilized actors.

Between these two monumental duds, critics and public were subjected to films, many of which on paper looked promising indeed. Bergman, Buñuel, Antonini, Fellini, Munk, Dassin, and Tchoukhrai were all presenting their latest work. Of them all, only one, the Soviet Union's thirty-eight-year-old Grigori Tchoukhari, had the gratification of receiving a massive ovation for his film, *Ballad for a Soldier*. Interestingly enough, this was just about the only "wholesome" film in the whole festival. The story could hardly be more simple. During the last war, a boy gets a 48-hour leave to go home to repair his mother's roof for the winter. The film touchingly, directly recounts the adventures which prevent his reaching home until he has time only to embrace his mother and run to catch the truck taking him back to his army unit. The people shown are very real human beings, seen with compassion, wisdom, humor, and no sentimentality. The love of the boy and a young girl he meets on the train is treated with a rare delicacy and discretion. The sophisticated, elegant festival audience exited from *Ballad* eyes red and cheeks wet.

The second Soviet entry, a more subdued film by Joseph Heiftz, is a nearly perfect rendering of the Chekhov short story, *Lady with the Dog*, which catches all the quiet anguish and frustration of the original. The transition from literature to the screen has seldom been better done.

Right up to the last day everyone confidently expected *Ballad for a Soldier* to walk away with the top prize, but instead Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* received the coveted Golden Palm, leaving the Soviets with a rather meagre award for "the best national selection of films." Popular opinion had it that the Summit breakup in Paris had played its role in the distribution of prizes at Cannes.

Fellini's much heralded *magnum opus* of three and one-half hours of Roman society is uncontestably an ambitious, handsome, skilled piece of film-making. Its very ambitions and technical achievement, however, lead one to be particularly demanding of it, and ultimately it does not quite make it as a major, moral study of the problems of our age. Perhaps one of the reasons for its failure is that we never get to know enough about nor care enough for the hero-journalist to feel the necessary identification or pity at his gradual moral degradation. Also, there is the feeling that it is all a bit too facile, and not quite tough-fibered enough. Still, even with its faults, it is an important film.

The jury, which included American novelist Henry Miller, declined to award prizes to either Ingmar Bergman or Luis Buñuel, while paying tribute to their talent and the merits of their films.

The Buñuel, shot in English with American actors, *The Young One*, is a twenty-six-day rush job which uncomfortably mixes nearly equal doses of *The Defiant Ones* with *Lolita*. Even apart from the disparate elements of its plot, the film suffers from bad acting, bad dialogue, dull photography, and seemingly nonexistent directing. French critics, for whom Buñuel can do no wrong, hailed it as another of the master's major works. Foreign critics were rather less receptive.

The Bergman, *Virgin Spring*, is a harsh, bitter medieval tale told with brilliance. Since it ends with a miracle, many considered it a religious film, but I saw it rather as Bergman's first statement of affirmation. What is significant is more

the vow to build, to create than the actual miracle itself. Deceptively straightforward in storyline, the film has great complexity, some of which only appears on a second screening. An exceedingly graphic rape scene aroused many hostile public reactions, and indignant walkouts. The International Film Critics Association awarded its prize to *Virgin Spring*.

L'Avventura by Michelangelo Antonioni, which shared the jury prize with the Japanese *Kagi* in a festival of controversial films, divided opinion the most violently. Hooted and booed during its screening, it rapidly won fervent supporters who, in the following days, termed Antonioni a master using the medium of film in a new, subtle, yet daring way. Others, including the writer, found the film an interesting experiment, desperately in need of cutting and expressive actors, and much more explicit direction. If people on the screen are going to be shown as being bored and leading boring lives, very great care must be taken not to simply bore the audience by the too vivid re-creation of boredom.

The award to *Kagi* (or *Strange Obsession* as it was billed in English) for its audacity of subject and its plastic qualities mildly outraged the audience. The story of an impotent old man and his attempts to solve this problem, which finally result in the four principal characters dropping dead, it provoked a great deal of what everyone thought was unintentional laughter. The Japanese apparently had the last laugh as they revealed that the film was intended as *humeur noire* and audiences in Tokyo laugh from beginning to end. This detail seems however to have been unknown to the Cannes jury at the time of the award-giving.

The festival had but two acknowledged comedies. One, the Polish entry, *Bad Luck* by Andrzej Munk, is a lively satire on all facets of Polish life from 1935 to the present. Including some fine savage swipes at Communist bureaucracy, it introduces a highly inventive and pro-

Monica Vitti in Antonioni's L'AVVENTURA.

Kon Ichikawa's KAGI
with Machiko Kyo.

ficient young actor named Bogumil Kobiela.

The other comedy, *Never on Sunday,* entered for Greece, is the work of the expatriate American director, Jules Dassin. He has cast himself as a well-meaning American hero who finally discovers happiness in Greece by leaving people to live their own lives instead of trying to convert them to his way of thought. Merlina Mercouri as the object of his conversion activity gives a bravura performance as an Athens prostitute which won her the award for the best female performance. The rhythmic, compelling *boukouzi* music of the sound track has already become a great popular hit in Paris. The reception following the film was the liveliest in the history of the festival, complete with an imported Greek folk orchestra and five thousand *ouzo* glasses smashed in toasts.

France, which last year swept the prizes and made the New Wave practically a household word, had a strange trio of films this May. The official entry by a curious turn was *Amerique Insolite* (Offbeat America), a feature-length documentary by young François Reichenbach, who spent six months touring the United States, camera in hand. M. Reichenbach's view of America is affectionate and sympathetic. His poem is half thank-you note, half love poem to the country of which he will shortly be a citizen. Visually the film is very handsome indeed.

Of the other two French entries, Jacques Becker's *Le Trou* seemed deserving of some attention in the award department, it being his last film. The slowly detailed account of a near break-out in a prison, this sober, well-shot film suffered from the presence of nonprofessional actors. Although well selected, they just couldn't deliver the goods in important scenes.

The third French film, *Moderato Cantabile,* finished barely in time for the festival, suffered from the negative, intensely female masochistic side of novelist Marguerite (*Hiroshima, Mon Amour*) Duras plus an excessively high-pitched performance by Jeanne Moreau. Peter Brook proved to be a thoroughly static theatrical director with no sense of film movement. The award which Miss Moreau shared with Miss Mercouri was considered to be more for all her other work than this particular film, but there was still many a boo when she rose for the prize.

Great Britain sent *Sons and Lovers,* which had two top-quality performances from two thoroughly reliable performers, Trevor Howard and Wendy Hiller, and some very distinguished photography; but somehow the character of the young man, Dean Stockwell, never took hold, and the film failed as a consequence.

For the rest of the feature competition films silence is kindest, with perhaps a passing mention for a sincere, honest try on the part of a young Spanish director, Carlos Saura with *Los Golfos.* The short films were amazingly poor in

Merlina Mercouri in Jules Dassin's
NEVER ON SUNDAY.

AMERIQUE INSOLITE: *François Reichenbach's view from the beach.*

quality. Only France, with *Les Enfants de Courant d'Air* by Edouard Luntz, with the brilliant Hungarian refugee Badel at the camera, had a really worthy entry.

Something went wrong with this Festival. Perhaps it was too long for the number of good films shown. Perhaps it was the absence of the usual glamorous stars and pretty starlets. Perhaps it was due to the mood created by the Paris Summit break-up. Or perhaps it was just the fact it was the thirteenth festival.

The Expensive Art

A Discussion of Film Distribution and Exhibition in the U.S.

The problem of the independent or unusual film in America is to an astounding extent a problem of distribution—as anyone attempting to secure backing for a film speedily discovers. Unless a film is sponsored by a company or government agency (which brings other handicaps in its train) its costs must be regained through some distribution mechanism: it must be taken to the exhibitors, and the exhibitors must take it to the audiences, who must see it and pay for doing so. This linkage is a symbiotic one: no element in it can exist without the others, and they stand or fall together.

Unfortunately, to date they have mostly fallen, so far as offbeat films are concerned. The dominant system of film distribution, keyed to the Hollywood product, has no place for the limited-audience film, and no established means of reaching specialized audiences. The art-house chains, while they have been growing somewhat, cannot as yet offer a financial basis upon which independent production can be sustained, and the distributors who supply them with films cannot either.

Paradoxically, we might say that both the Hollywood and foreign-film distribution systems are too "efficient": they cannot afford the risks that are necessary if film art is to develop healthily in this country—the mutations, so to speak, of which many must be sacrificed that the growth of new forms may proceed. The task devolves upon those who will benefit from new films: the film-makers and their potential audiences.

What then is to be done?

The tasks are clearly formidable, for film is evidently a medium whose distribution and exhibition patterns tend strongly toward centralization and standardization. But it is essential that solutions be found if film is to become freer

AMERIQUE INSOLITE: *François Reichenbach's view from the beach.*

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as an art, to break out of the rigid commercial pattern that has prevailed hitherto. Some freak occurrences will always take place—when creative men manage to seize the main chance. But it would be good to know what may be done in a systematic way.

To gain some concrete idea of what the tasks are, FILM QUARTERLY *invited together a group of people especially concerned with the distribution and exhibition of foreign and new films:* SHIRLEY CLARKE, *maker of experimental films;* EDWARD HARRISON, *importer and distributor;* BILL KENLY, *theater manager;* ELODIE OSBORN, *operator of a film society; and* AMOS VOGEL, *president of Cinema 16 in New York.* BILL BERNHARDT *organized the discussion project, and* JOHN ADAMS *presided for* FILM QUARTERLY.

HARRISON: It is a fact that certain fine films open in New York and then do not get shown around the country. The reason is that they do not get critical acclaim, or if they do, they don't do very much business in New York. The result is that art theater owners in the United States, who are by and large only interested in making money, will not show the pictures. I can cite the example of deSica's *Umberto D*, which is recognized as one of the great films of this century.

The picture won the New York Film Critics' Prize and, in New York, where we were able to concentrate a large barrage of publicity, we did get a play. But outside New York, the picture didn't do business, and that fact became known to exhibitors who didn't want to plug a picture that wouldn't make money for them. Or one that even may show a slight profit. They just don't want to take the chance. They want a sure thing.

Another aspect of the problem is that there are many pictures shown abroad at festivals and written up in film magazines which don't strike distributors in the United States as likely to make money.

KENLY: Well, in New York, as in the rest of the country, the theater owner wants to be guaranteed that he's not going to lose money. Consequently he is quite unwilling to book a "nonentity." A festival winner is not necessarily going to be a box-office winner in this country.

HARRISON: Taking on a motion picture for distribution in the United States is not just a matter of laying down a certain amount of money and recognizing that you have a substantial investment to follow through with. You have to live with the picture for maybe the first four or five months of its existence. You have to devote a great deal of time and effort to the picture, to prepare it and to see that it is properly launched and to see that it gets a chance to live.

In general, the distributor's investment in a picture today comes to about $20,000 in cash outlay and in time spent.

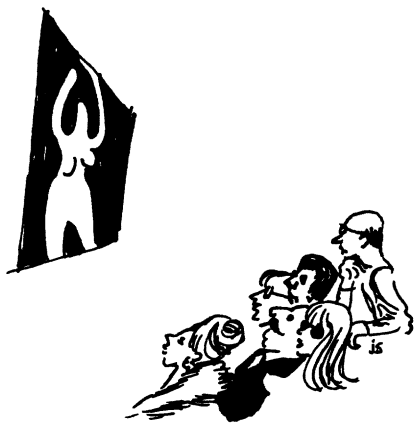
ADAMS: You mean the price of the picture plus what it costs you to get it into a house?

HARRISON: No. Even if you didn't pay any money for the picture, it would cost you almost $20,000 to launch it.

What goes into it is this. You have to import a negative and a print, usually. Subtitles must be written and photographed. Then you have to make a master print and about four other prints. That's an absolute minimum. Usually you need about eight prints, no matter what kind of a picture you've got. So that you've got there about a $5,000 investment in cash. In addition you have to make up photos, trailers, prepare advertising, have screenings, get up a pub-

licity campaign for the picture, find a theater that's willing to play it, and then go through the operation of opening the film, which is itself quite an expensive operation, involving trying to obtain the widest possible attention for the film by showing it to the national magazines, the weeklies, the dailies, the specialized press, to groups which might have a special interest in the picture.

Now, as I mentioned a moment ago, you *have* to have success in this business, at least success in New York, because if you open a picture in



New York, and it runs only three weeks, that fact is immediately known to theater owners all around the country and they don't want to play the picture. Or they will only after you've spent weeks soliciting them with letters and phone calls, and only then if you catch them when they *need* a picture. This can be a fine, even an extraordinary film.

Only recently, I went to Japan and I looked at 32 pictures there. The one I thought best was the film called *Gan,* a film which the Japanese critics had selected among their all-time best. I changed the title to *The Mistress* (I thought that *Wild Geese* might be regarded as a documentary). This was the story of a girl who became the mistress of a man in order to help support her father, which was a fairly common practice in Japan at one time. The picture contrasted the old and the new ways in Japan, showing how the girl turned from a passive, submissive girl into a woman who rebelled against both her father and her lover, and then, at the end, leaves both of them. *Time's* critic picked it as one of the best films of 1959 and compared it to a Japanese *Doll's House.* But what happened with that film? It showed for three weeks in New York. The critics didn't understand it, and, with a couple of minor exceptions, didn't appreciate it. So that at the present time we have played maybe 45 theaters with the film.

CLARKE: How many theaters are there available, generally, to, let's say, a most successful foreign film?

HARRISON: Well, over a period of years there would be about 600, including New York.

KENLY: Don't you feel that more and more theaters in New York are turning to art films, and have for the last five years? They're dropping the Hollywood product.

CLARKE: If art films are getting more and more opportunity to play in New York, why is it that it's more and more difficult to get these films played around the country? Perhaps the method of getting these films to the people who have a zest for them is not the one we think it is. Part of the reason audience taste has changed so over the past ten years, I think, is that going to foreign films, now, is the thing to do. It's chic. It's intellectually "in," and I wonder if it isn't possible for a young American film-maker to go out and seek an audience today. D. W. Griffith and Robert Flaherty actually took their films around the country on a tour in order to sell them. A different audience can be gotten to that way, the kind of audience that goes to plays and concerts. Maybe we should talk about road-showing films?

HARRISON: Well, just let me say this about road-showing. Road-showing is something that is almost completely unfeasible for most films, and practically impossible for art films; because road shows involve a great deal of expensive planning that you can't see a way to get back your money from.

If you want to road-show a film, you have to go into a town beforehand and make arrange-

ments with a theater or with a group there to play the film on a percentage basis, like United Artists did with *Henry V*. They went to the University of Michigan—for example—in Ann Arbor; they made an arrangement there with the University authorities where they got, I think, 60 cents a ticket and the University got 40 cents a ticket—or something like that.

They sent a man in there some weeks in advance; they arranged to placard the University with posters and notices, posters on bulletin boards, in all the various schools. Teachers in the various University courses that were directly interested in this film—such as English literature, history—would be especially primed, alerted to the fact that the film was coming and would notify their students.

And then they had to placard the town—

Now all that would entail an expense—roughly say $750 to $1,000. On most engagements you couldn't possibly get that money back. Hollywood only road-shows its biggest spectacles.

ADAMS: Ed, in general, how much will a distributor have to pay to get a film in the first place?

HARRISON: In a few cases people have paid as much as $100,000, like for *400 Blows*. And there was no certainty that they could ever get their money back. The whole business is a gamble. Now when you deal with foreign films you must, in essence, deal with films of some quality. I'm not talking about the Brigitte Bardot films or pictures like that which had sex angles and which could more appropriately be looked at as exploitation pictures.

KENLY: The unexpected success, the tremendous success of Miss Bardot's *God Created Woman* has led the foreign film producer to believe that there is money in them thar hills in America, and therefore they have upped the asking price of their product because they feel that anything they have is going to make money in this country, which makes it doubly difficult for the distributor in America to acquire films at a reasonable rate.

VOGEL: There is the general impression abroad, as we all know, that America is a very rich country and that therefore you can ask $100,000 for a feature, or you can ask $15,000 for a short and get away with it. The result is that in a great many cases we cannot come to terms with them.

HARRISON: This has been the commonplace of the market in Europe and what has happened is that after a year, and the picture isn't sold, a more realistic view steps in and it then becomes possible to buy the film at a reasonable price.

Now I'll tell you of a recent experience I had myself here recently. I had a film sent over from France called *Goha*. It's a film based on a novel that was very popular abroad, and it's the first film made in Tunisia. It's made in beautiful color—it's a charming film.

Now I looked at the film and I liked it, but then I thought, "Where will I show this picture in New York?" The problem of where you can release a picture in New York is getting increasingly difficult. There are more and more films being imported from abroad. The result is that there is a pressure on the theaters. It's a buyer's market, not a seller's market. Theaters always have a number of pictures they can play—they are not hungry for product today the way they were. Also, some of the major companies are putting their pictures into the New York art theaters with the result that the actual first runs in New York are diminishing. The New York theater operators are in a very favorable position, and they are taking the utmost advantage of it.

For one thing, they jack up their overheads to the point where they are sure to come out because of the bad deals that the distributor has to take under the circumstances. Another thing they are doing is to insist on what they call "house deals." This is a deal where if you want to go into a theater with a picture, you have to guarantee that the theater owner will get his overhead out of the first monies that come in. Now, by exaggerating overhead one theater here in New York has a profit of over $1,000 a week just on its claimed overhead.

Then you have to pay 90–10 over that: the distributor pays 90 per cent of the advertising and the theater owner pays 10 per cent. When

you're advertising the opening of a picture in New York, you've got to spend well over $2,000. So the picture must gross about $8,000 or $9,000 for you to even earn a few hundred dollars out of it in the first week. But meanwhile the theater owner is completely protected.

And the theater owners, also, are looking at a picture with an eye to whether it will make money. Take the Fifth Avenue Playhouse, with the lowest overhead in New York. They got *The Magician,* which grossed the first week, we'll say, $10,000—maybe it was more or less. At any rate they began to see that the house could make a lot of money. So now the Fifth Avenue Playhouse, which formerly was looking for off-beat and artistic pictures, is looking for pictures to make a lot of dough with. I would have thought, with a picture like *Goha,* here I have a possible home for the picture. So when I saw *Goha,* although I liked it, and at another time I would have said, "Yes, I'll take the picture," I can't see a place to open it in New York. It would not be suicidal, but you know, not quite bright to take a picture and prepare it and keep it on the shelf for several years with the hope that you could release it later. If the distributor is going to meet the competition and exist in the market—which he must, after all—he must try to find films which,

while they have merit, will meet the demands of the theater operators to a certain extent so that he can at least get his picture released. So that it becomes increasingly more difficult to get to see the better foreign films which are not generally regarded as big box-office potential.

Do you think my statement of what's going on is basically correct, Bill?

KENLY: Well, yes. And another aspect, too, which you haven't mentioned, is that certain theaters are owned by distributors who bring in their own films and will hold the films for a number of weeks, or even months, in order to lead the out-of-town exhibitors to believe that these are tremendous box-office attractions.

But there are situations in which a distributor or theater group will play a picture because they like it, but this doesn't happen every day. Every few years a distributor likes a film, buys it and has difficulty having it shown. The films of Carl Dreyer *Ordet* and *Day of Wrath* are examples.

One example, I think the most disappointing film I've seen this year, is *The Little Island* by Richard Williams, which Amos Vogel showed with much success at Cinema 16. It was booked into the Paris Theater. The *New York Times'* critic hated it, gave it a bad review, the audience hissed it, booed, walked out, wanted their money back. We had to pull it after two days. It's regrettable, but this happened in New York City.

HARRISON: Well, there's the similar story of Francis Thompson's film *New York, New York.* It was shown at a Broadway theater, and the audiences vocally expressed their dislike for it. The film originally ran 20 minutes and was later cut to 10. While it made some money for the distributor who was trying to exploit it in the bigger commercial theaters, he finally removed the picture entirely from this show.

VOGEL: You say the audience booed and hissed, Bill. I wonder how many people *actually* booed and hissed. Sometimes we show a film at Cinema 16, and if, out of an audience of 1,000 people, 10 people hiss, they give the impression of a far larger number of people. But let's say it's 50 people. What about the 950 who *didn't* hiss, who didn't boo, who either applauded or didn't applaud, but at least felt it was worth seeing this film? The theater owners are giving in to a small and very vocal segment of their audience, and thereby disenfranchising the majority. I'm not convinced that the majority of the Paris Theater audience hissed this

film, or for that matter, the film you mentioned before.

A more flagrant example of the same kind of thing happened with Norman McLaren's *Neighbors.* It got its first-run showing in New York—in fact it was quite successful—and then it was sent out of the city and apparently on one of the report sheets that each local exhibitor fills out and sends to the home office, there was a remark to the effect that a couple of people in the audience objected to the film. As a result of this *one* report—I know this for a fact—the film was pulled from national distribution altogether. It has never been shown commercially again.

OSBORN: The whole thing reminds me of the Armory Show.

VOGEL: I think you're making a mistake when you compare this to the Armory Show. One was an example of an exhibition of art; the other is a real estate and business operation for the purpose not of showing you the best films, but of showing those films that will make the most money for the owner of the theater and for the distributor of the films. If a film is good *and* also makes money, so much the better. But if there is a choice to be made between the two, the exhibitor will always choose money. Of course: this is business. If I had an investment of $100,000 in every film I showed, I would immediately become subject to exactly the same pressures as everybody else.

Another related factor is, of course, the role of the critics. I think a very large share of the responsibility for this situation must be borne by the critics and they must not be absolved of it. One of the things we should be discussing is: who are these critics? Where do they come from? What are their qualifications? [*Laughter.*]

HARRISON: You are getting into a very dangerous realm, because whatever you can say about the power of critics to damage pictures, which is undoubtedly true, under our system they have a perfect right to self-expression.

VOGEL: But they express themselves, not in a room as we do, but to millions of readers. This is more than just self-expression. Surely they have a responsibility.

HARRISON: Well, I think their responsibility is to evaluate a film according to their own best judgments—whether or not it is, in their opinion, an artistic, meritorious, entertaining and worthwhile film. They undoubtedly err in their judgment, as we do, too, and they may cause great hardships under certain circumstances.

KENLY: But favorable reviews don't always mean big public attendance. I'm thinking of Bresson's *A Man Escaped,* Bergman's *Seventh Seal* and *Brink of Life,* and Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible, Part II.* All of these, I believe, were acclaimed by the critics in New York City and yet the public did not accept them.

HARRISON: But in the case of *Ivan the Terrible,* the major critic in New York, Bosley Crowther of the *Times,* said that the picture should have stayed in a museum. Now I thought the picture was a masterpiece, myself.

VOGEL: One general criterion underlies all film criticism in the daily press: Will this film entertain? Will you be happy when you leave the theater? [*Laughter.*] A person may see *Brink of Life* and be deeply affected by it and therefore deeply disturbed—as I was—I did not leave the theater in a happy frame of mind, but I left it in a more *important* frame of mind, one of searching, beginning to again confront oneself as a human being. Most commercial art is designed to leave people in a state bordering on pre-alcoholic euphoria. The critics feel it is their function—and they have been told by their newspapers that it is their function—to tell people whether they can *enjoy* a given motion picture. Now I submit that you can't really enjoy, on that level, *Ivan the Terrible,* or the deeply disturbing trilogy by Satyajit Ray. You cannot approach motion pictures only on that level.

One of the best critics, Archer Winsten of the *Post,* consistently and intentionally writes his reviews on several levels, and in that sense he's already better than most other critics. He has one level for the serious movie-goer, and another level for, let's say, the middle-brow. Thus he will say that for people who don't like to be disturbed, for people who don't like ballet, or people who don't like to be sad—this or that film is unsuitable.

HARRISON: Let me tell you something, though. Archer Winsten did a couple of columns on *Pather Panchali,* and it had virtually no effect on the theater owners of New York. Some other thing happened that I was able to get a theater for the picture.

VOGEL: So you need five others like him.

HARRISON: In today's atmosphere, under today's conditions, in New York, a column by Archer Winsten saying it's a great film doesn't have the power to result in bookings.

CLARKE: Who are the influential critics as far as theater owners are concerned, Bill?

KENLY: Crowther, Crowther, and Crowther.

CLARKE: You mean there's absolutely——

KENLY: Crowther and Winsten. The *Mirror* means nothing, the *News* means nothing, the *World Telegram,* the *Journal American,* none of these. The weeklies—no. The *New Yorker* once had it, but I don't believe people pay much attention to the *New Yorker* now.

HARRISON: You've got a good man on *Time.*

CLARKE: Wouldn't *Cue* be helpful? People pick it up to see where they are going to go.

HARRISON: *Cue* would be helpful, but—

CLARKE: So it all just goes right back to the *Times* and the *Post.*

HARRISON: I agree with you—but I want to tell you off the record the discussion I had with [*a critic*], who told me about some bad reactions to a review he'd done, and I asked, "How many letters?" and he said, "Two or three." I said, "You mean to say that from two or three letters you qualify your review that way?" I said to him, "My God, if you like something, say it!" So he did say it for a while, but I notice he's gone back.

CLARKE: Magazines like *The Atlantic* and *The Saturday Review* should be tapped to have articles appearing by leading thinkers and critics about films—excuse me!—as an *art.*

HARRISON: Well, the problem of getting the national magazines, say *The Atlantic* or *Harper's,* to do pieces about your films is difficult because these magazines don't have columns devoted to film, and in order to get an article done, there must be contact with a writer who will then sell the idea to the magazine and will be able to do it for whatever small sum he can get from that type of publication. So too much time can't be spent on that kind of thing. We do it, you know, where we can, but you can't do it concentratedly because you don't always have a picture that will lend itself to that kind of thing, or a picture around which there's a controversy that will make it worthwhile to endeavor to interest special publications in it. And then they usually want the articles to run while the picture is still playing, so you have to plan a long time ahead or the picture has to have a very long run.

I think it's very important that emphasis on film as an art be made as strong as possible. I, of course, think that the educational function of making the public aware of motion pictures as an art and a cultural medium, a pleasure, a delight, and a rich experience, is something that hasn't been sufficiently touched on here. Now we know that one of the largest audiences for cultural things in our country is the women's audience. They sponsor symphonies and traveling poets, and lecturers and many other things like that. [*Laughter.*] There are women's clubs

in all the communities, and there are the women's magazines which by and large hardly touch on foreign films. Now there's a field that could bear cultivation.

CLARKE: But it's going to be very difficult to get *The Ladies' Home Journal*, which won't deal even with painting at a high level, to deal with film. You know this development of the audience is essential for independent *American* filmmakers, too. They need a voice to speak for them in the cultural centers of our country.

VOGEL: I sometimes think that if the so-called "common man" was offered an alternative in his local theater in terms of seeing an

average Hollywood film, or say, *Pather Panchali*, not on a one-shot basis, but year in and year out, I think that the so-called "simple man" may well appreciate such a film more than a jaded metropolitan newspaper critic.

OSBORN: If more writers would respect the cinema, if we had more James Agees, for instance, writing for the papers, I'm sure it wouldn't take very long to build up an audience for the cinema. I think the problem is that people don't know what to look for. They're totally ignorant of the qualities of a superior film. They think films are something that they go to see just the way they look at the TV programs in their living rooms, for entertainment, and if anything more is asked of them, they resent it. I found this even with the film society I ran in Salisbury, Connecticut.

VOGEL: We are faced with what I would call a general and complete lack of film culture, and of a film milieu, you know, an art milieu, surrounding the motion picture. There is much more of that in Western Europe where there exist serious film magazines and good critics. Here you sometimes feel you're operating in a void. There is not enough support and there's not enough understanding of this medium. This is only a part of the general cultural problem that we have in this country. There is a tremendous emphasis here on mass culture and on mass media. Culture has become a means for people engaged in it to purvey a substitute and surrogate for culture. They do this only in terms of increasing their own financial standing, and in terms of keeping the mass of the people reasonably satisfied and adjusted to whatever their lot in life is.

We have magazines like *Film Quarterly* or *Film Culture*, but they don't reach the masses. Now I contend that the so-called "average mass audience" would be capable, would be eminently capable of enjoying the films we enjoy. We are not in that sense an elite, or, if we are, I think it can be changed.

CLARKE: We have certainly proven that when we've shown truly creative films to unsuspecting audiences, that they also go for them. It isn't always true that they dismiss them. Now I think that probably has to do with the over-all sense of America growing up culturally, and that, basically, some strides have been made.

I remember you the other night at Cinema 16, Amos, when you were jumping up and down with joy. It was really very cute. Amos said to me, "You know, ten years ago they would have booed *all* these films." Even his own audience, which to begin with was somewhat special. Now they have grown up.

OSBORN: Maybe it would behoove us to have more Cinema 16's.

CLARKE: No doubt about that.

VOGEL: Well, the success of the venture here in New York indicated to me that it would be possible to do this in other *major* centers. But the problem is financial all over again. Cinema 16, for more years than I think you know, ran at a loss here in New York before it became self-sustaining. To start Cinema 16's in other cities

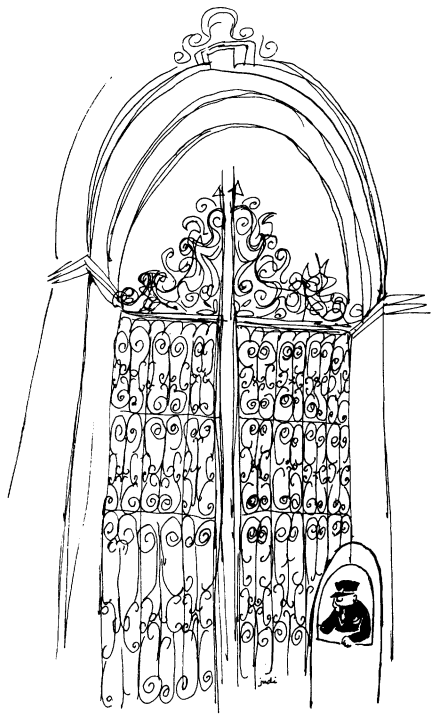
would involve a financial risk of a minimum of $10,000 to start with in each situation, what with the publicity and advertising and mailing and office help. Now that's a considerable sum of money, at least for me, and there's no real assurance of success. It would always have to be run by the people in the local situation, who would have to be sufficiently interested and capable. But the people who come and offer to do this seem to be interested in a commercial proposition, and they overestimate the earning capacity of Cinema 16. And this is simply not what I would look for. I think in some way it would have to be subsidized or done in coöperation with another already existing organization in each city.

However, if such an expansion to other cities occurred, it would have very significant value, because it would mean that I could bring in films from abroad, features and shorts, and assure the film-maker of a high rental. There's one story I could tell you that has a lot of bearing on this discussion. A few years ago I got a feature-length German avant-garde film into this country: *Nicht Mehr Fliehen* (*No More Fleeing*), which has quite a reputation abroad. Now this is a German film, no subtitles. We couldn't think of dubbing it, or even subtitling it, when I discovered what the cost would be. So the film was lying around for quite some time. Finally I hit upon the idea of approaching the American Federation of Film Societies and also our entire out-of-town mailing list of film renters, asking whether they would be interested in supporting the subtitling of this worthwhile film. It was done on the basis of advance bookings, and we received about 15 bookings from the entire list, which was enough to subtitle the film, and it's now in distribution. This gives you an idea of how we could go to an existing audience, even perhaps in terms of producing (not features, but shorts), to make them active participants.

HARRISON: How much did this subtitling cost?

VOGEL: It was about $1,000. It was a feature in 35mm, so it had to be reduced to 16mm as well. This whole 16mm market, by the way, is unknown in Europe, where they think of 16mm the way we think of 8mm—home movies. When they hear there are large 16mm distributors who show shorts all over the country, they're amazed.

When we started with these experimental and art shorts, there was nothing—no one had



ever distributed such films before. And now we have about 1,000 organizations nationally which rent films from us. Incidentally, speaking of film societies, they're our worst renters—the most conservative in booking. The organizations that book modern films are private groups, women's clubs, churches, labor organizations, art museums. The film societies, by and large, are satisfied with showing Greta Garbos if they can get them. Here the so-called leaders of public opinion are really behind.

KENLY: Elodie, defend yourself!

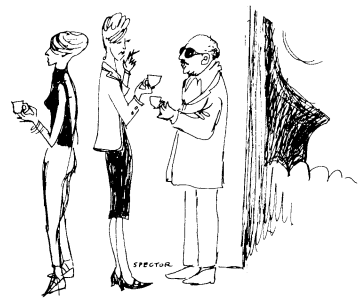
OSBORN: Well, we started out several years ago with a large group of people and then mem-

bership began to fall off because the members didn't like the more serious things that we were doing. When we actually asked what kinds of films they wanted to see, they wanted lighter and lighter things.

But we were still getting more people to the film society meetings than the local theater was getting, and the theater owner decided that it would be nice if he worked with us, and brought films into the community that *we* felt were worthwhile. For one season this worked very well. We couldn't get all the films we would like to have had, and we did put in a few things we would not have chosen, like the current Fernandel and the typical Guinness picture. But nevertheless it was successful. Then, without consulting us, he ran the next season by himself, and this time there were only two or three good films among a lot of bad ones. To our amazement, the attendance began to fall off. He did *not* get people coming back after they found the standards had changed. This, then, in a sense, was the opposite of our film society experience. In the end we cut the Society down to a small group who were *really* interested in seeing serious films, and meanwhile the theater burned down so we had no competition. [*Laughter.*]

However, there was a great deal of interest in town about the films of Bergman, and I began to hear it mentioned that the film society should be started again to show his films. So I thought, "All right, we'll try." We took *The Seventh Seal* – the only Bergman that they had read about, it was again a matter of the press. They knew about it from magazines and newspapers. To our total amazement we had the library absolutely filled; we didn't have a single extra chair. But the reaction was not good. This film was asking something of the audience, and they went away wondering if this was the kind of film they really did want to see.

HARRISON: What you have described is the problem that very often faces the theater owner who wants to put in certain films that might be good, but finds that his audience is reacting against him and the films. So the battle of the film society is also sometimes the battle of the theater owner.



ADAMS: Amos, what about having Cinema 16's on television?

CLARKE: I would like to vote violently against it for the reason that I think it is absolutely destructive to the art of the film. These films are made as films, not for a teeny little box, and I don't care how many people see it, they will not be seeing film, but something else.

HARRISON: In the early days of television, they took certain foreign films, like *Open City, Bicycle Thief* and others, and showed them with subtitles. Now, no chain, or practically no chain, will take a picture with titles. They insist that the films be dubbed and a number of companies are buying foreign films and dubbing them, and apparently showing them with some success in the United States.

As a result, you hear stories that foreign producers are becoming aware that perhaps there is some television money to be gotten out of these things, and that has perhaps increased prices, making certain things that were perhaps accessible no longer available. However, usually television is restricted, so that factor doesn't enter too much.

But I want to say, *à propos* of the culture and the mass audience, we must realize that we're not really dealing with a mass audience product. Whereas a foreign film can look forward to, say, a top of 600 bookings in a titled version—maybe a little more, sometimes a little less—a Hollywood film can look forward to anywhere from 10,000 to 17,000 bookings if it's of the same

quality. So you're dealing with another world. Now, the mass audience is really not interested in things of great cultural value. I don't mean that they don't have the aptitude, but at the present time, because of their economic circumstances, and the many other things that go into their outlook at the moment, they're not interested in the higher cultural products, of which motion pictures are one.

VOGEL: Why are you so reluctant to admit that this man Ray who deals with the very bases of human life—death, love—is not able to approach a mass audience?

HARRISON: I'm not accepting anything except the facts of life as they exist today. There are many theaters that will not play them. Now, there are foreign films being shown on television, but they are being shown in dubbed versions. They can be shown to a mass audience that would not have the opportunity to see them otherwise. I want you to know I'm not holding any brief for dubbing, I'm just trying to recite a few facts for whatever value they may have. A foreign film that is dubbed can get into some of these commercial theaters which would never play a film that has superimposed titles. So there is that possibility of expanding the audience. That's been shown. The question is: "Do we so destroy the value of the film by dubbing it that we are performing a detrimental act to the motion picture art, or, in the case of Ray, to the director, by dubbing the film?" If you know, for example, that you can play maybe several hundred theaters more with a picture—now with *Gate of Hell*, I think that we could play maybe 500 or 1,000 theaters more because it is dubbed—what would you say under those circumstances? Would it be right?

CLARKE: Maybe it is a point for the film-makers to know about because there is always the possibility of making versions in several languages, and if the film-maker does the dubbing, I think that artistically you are going to be on a little bit happier ground than usual.

HARRISON: The film-maker may not be equipped to make the dubbing.

CLARKE: No, but it might be possible for the distributor to help set up a situation where he could supervise it. Let's say for example, Ray. Now, it is within the realm of possibility that the film could be dubbed easily. There isn't a great deal of talk going on. But, you know, John and I went through an experience recently where we were asked our advice on dubbing a film—*Hiroshima, Mon Amour*—and both of us said "no." On an artistic level, not a commercial level.

KENLY: But this is a personal attitude. Was *La Strada* damaged when it was dubbed?

CLARKE: For me it was so damaged I finally decided I didn't like the film because the things that were being said I hadn't gotten so explicitly in the original version. And this was interesting, because two of the actors were actually talking English, so they were really saying what they had been saying to begin with, yet I thought it hurt it considerably. It was inartistic. A certain subtle mystery disappeared and the dialogue seemed banal in American voices.

VOGEL: But, of course, the other answer to this general problem of dubbing versus subtitling is that one has also to bring about a greater acceptance in America of subtitled films. This is also not a static situation. You continue to expose people to subtitled versions and then hope that after a decade of doing this that there will be a greater acceptance. And there really *has* been, incidentally. It's again an educational function which has to be fulfilled and again I'm afraid that the people who determine the nature of the business are not people who are interested in an educational function.

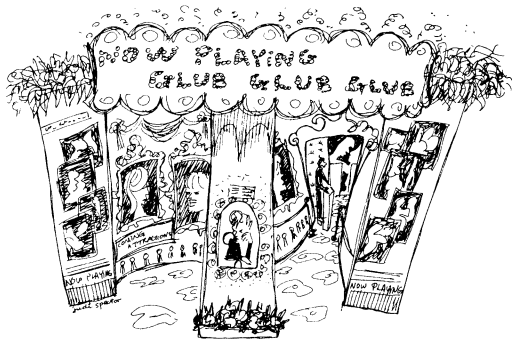
I agree, by the way, that in most cases a film is damaged by dubbing. I've never seen one that was all right. For example, Ray's trilogy: even though there is very little dialogue, to me it would be ludicrous to have these downtrodden Indian peasants speak a colloquial English with American idiomatic expressions in it!

CLARKE: I remember seeing *Bitter Rice* where they did that. It was horrifying.

VOGEL: There is no short cut to art. You've got to live up to it and not make it live down to you.

CLARKE: Ray told me that dubbing was even a problem for him in India. The film was in

Bengali, which is not spoken by most of the Indian population. They have an enormous problem showing his films throughout India. They have to title or dub them.



VOGEL: Are we not losing sight of an important factor in our discussion? Since we are asking why good films are not being shown more widely, we are using a criterion of the value and artistic merit of a motion picture. Now this is one field. And I would say that this field is entirely separate in a sense, especially for purposes of such a discussion, from the field of the motion picture industry, which is a commercial venture by businessmen.

HARRISON: That's not true at all.

VOGEL: Well, let me finish.

HARRISON: Go on, but nevertheless it's not true!

VOGEL: Well, I must say, over the years, I found it increasingly important to make this distinction as clearly as possible. A couple of months ago on the TV program *Open End,* there was a discussion on the movie industry by leading motion picture personalities—Dore Schary, Arthur Mayer, Otto Preminger, Max Youngstein. This discussion interested me because the participants talked for hours and when it was all over you realized that what they had been discussing was star salaries, box-office receipts, the financial aspects of exhibition and distribution—and there had been absolutely no discussion of the motion picture as a possible or potential form of art. This seemed also to occur to a director there, Daniel Mann, who at the end of the evening very shyly commented that they had been talking about money, rather than about films, and that he thought the distinction was important. They all turned to him and said, "You're absolutely right and we agree with you—and, by the way, how many thousands of dollars did this film lose?" And they immediately got back to what was most important to them. Now, as long as commerce rules motion pictures, just so long will the problem we're discussing be with us. We might try to ameliorate it, but the problem will continue to exist as long as the commercial interests predominate. This, then, has to do with the structure of the industry.

There's a little anecdote about Mitropoulos. He conducted Stravinsky in one of the smaller towns in America for the first time. There was a lot of booing and hissing. When he got through he said, "Oh, they don't like it? I'll do it again!" You need that type of people, otherwise you won't get anywhere.

CLARKE: I can't tell you how many times people have come to me and said, after they'd seen a film of mine the second or third time, that they'd liked it. You know, somebody was pushing them at them.

HARRISON: You think they should have to be pushed, Shirley?

CLARKE: Well, I happen to be of the school that thinks that's all right. I know there are people who don't agree with this, and there are critics who call film a mass medium and criticize me for doing things in a medium that must be understood and accepted the first time round. In my own experience as a producer of shorts, my films have earned most when I have been willing to go with them and talk. It is this kind of small, but actual, audience, I think, we are referring to when we ask why good foreign films are not playing to more people. But perhaps the audience must organize *itself* to the point where it can order the films it wants to see. Distributors would announce that a film is available, and perhaps that there is somebody who can go and talk about the film, to help the audiences look for the values the film-makers intend. There *is* an audience for these things. Who goes to concerts? Who goes to art museums? Who

goes to the cultural life of our country? The same kind of audience can be drawn to film societies.

For instance, I was told by Lionel Rogosin that he recently took *On the Bowery* to the Boston area, and by talking with the film at three places in that area, he was able to make quite a sizable sum—sufficient that he now sees himself trotting around the country with his films. That's one of the reasons I brought up this possibility. There's no doubt that people will pay a little extra to get the live film-maker. And some of us live film-makers are willing, and will thus get a little money and, better than that, will get the films shown. It's one of the little stilettoes we can put into the commercial world, so that eventually the kind of film we're talking about can get to bigger audiences.

VOGEL: You know, whatever we've said earlier about features holds true a thousand times over for shorts. If the situation for features is deplorable, for shorts it's impossible.

KENLY: It's difficult for the maker of short films, because if he brings his newly made short to an exhibitor, bypassing the distributor, and if it's shown with a film that lasts only three weeks, it certainly isn't going to help him financially. Also, who wants to book the short after that in a first-run house?

CLARKE: No, you can't do it that way.

ADAMS: *You* did.

CLARKE: Yes, but you really can't go directly to very many exhibitors, so it doesn't make too much sense. Theaters don't book shorts, after all; people don't go to see shorts, except under rare conditions—so economically it's the same logic we were discussing before. But certainly as the world of foreign films and art films gets bigger, the theaters *are* more interested in better shorts, and the distributors are looking for them.

HARRISON: I don't think any foreign film distributor is looking for better shorts. My own experience is this: I take a short only if I like it very much, because the time and effort I have to put into the selling and promoting of it are not warranted by the returns I can get.

CLARKE: Well, I had a lucky experience with one short that made back its cost in a New York booking—*In Paris Parks*. It had a very long run on a fluke deal. I was even able to choose the feature it played with.

HARRISON: What happened after the first run?

CLARKE: It played a few other places. I didn't have a distributor, and I'm not a distributor, so that was the end of that. But I got back my costs, or even a little more, because it also played in 16mm. But I wouldn't recommend this as an economic reality. Now, had a distributor had it, I wouldn't have made back my money because I would have shared the profits with the distributor. But the distributor would have taken it around the country, and probably we would have ended up about the same.

HARRISON: I think you're trying to subvert the distribution system, and I'm all for you! [*Laughter.*]

CLARKE: Well, you laugh about it, but I think it's true that the present distribution system to some degree *has* to be subverted. Very few people are making experimental films, or documentary films, and yet over the years both have had an enormous influence on the industry.

ADAMS: In Paris, recently, there have been programs of shorts and short features which have been successful. The Rouch film *Children of the River* was put together with Truffaut's *Les Mistons*, and the Canadian film *City of Gold*. They played three or four art houses and did such good business that other packages were put together. I wonder if something of the same sort couldn't be done over here. It would be a nice solution to the problem of what to do with 40- and 45-minute short features.

VOGEL: In many cases the exhibitor not only doesn't know what shorts are available, but very often doesn't even view the shorts he puts into his theater. There are exceptions, of course.

KENLY: I think most of the first-run houses in New York pay attention to their shorts.

VOGEL: Well, but aside from the first-run situations, it isn't worth the exhibitor's time to go look at a large number of shorts, since he

considers them a very unimportant part of his program. Now, to me, this is a terribly unfortunate situation, because in short films there is often as much art as there is in features. The shorts are easier to produce; they cost much less; there's much more room in shorts for a creative artist to express himself.

CLARKE: Room for *personal* expression.

VOGEL: Yes. That's all that any artist can or should do. It should always be personal expression. Now, many of the major film-makers have started in the short-film field, so there's a tremendous need for short-film production to continue if we're really interested in the future of film art. Now at Cinema 16 I've been very fortunate, because not being subject to box-office pressures, I can show any short I personally like, no matter whether or not I feel it would be commercially successful subsequently. Moreover, the short is not relegated to the inferior position it has in the regular theaters but is considered an important part of the program. In fact the majority of our programs consist of shorts.

I haven't gone into theatrical distribution of shorts for the simple reason that if I did, I would become subject to the same pressures as the commercial distributor of shorts. For example, if I had a short that might get a first run bringing in $750 over a ten-week period, this would have to be split between the distributor and the producer of the film. In general, I think you have to have a rich man who would be willing to put certain shorts into circulation, perhaps making a little money, or perhaps even taking a loss. I don't think Ed could run his business on the basis of the return from shorts.

HARRISON: If we didn't like 'em, we wouldn't handle 'em. It doesn't pay to handle shorts.

KENLY: Well, you have no competition any more from the major studios.

VOGEL: Yes, but take Shirley's case. It's well within the realm of possibility for a film-maker or a distributor to get a first run in New York. But to get distribution nationally you need a distributor; you need an office where they schedule bookings and make out invoices, and so on. And to do all this becomes unprofitable in terms of what these out-of-town situations can pay.

HARRISON: We've been offered $10 a week for a short—which we refused.

VOGEL: But they do get commercial shorts, Hollywood shorts, for that kind of money.

HARRISON: Yes, but you'd find, for example, on the Georg Pal films, that while they might get $5 a week, or $10, they'd get 10,000 bookings. One of the reasons they stopped making shorts was that they couldn't make any money out of them.

CLARKE: But I think they stopped them for another reason also. They stopped when the studios went out of the business of making vast numbers of films and no longer were training people by the same methods they had used on "B" pictures and shorts. Now, they desperately need material, and I've been told by Twentieth Century–Fox that if I'd come up with some ideas for shorts, they'd give me the CinemaScope lens.

HARRISON: Double bills are another reason why shorts went out.

CLARKE: Well, my feeling is that as the Hollywood features get longer, it's going to be impossible to double-bill them, and they're going to be looking for films about 20 minutes long. This gives an opportunity for a kind of film that hasn't existed for a long time.

OSBORN: There's one question I'd like to ask. Is there no possibility of a single place where really first-rate films could be shown? I was thinking of the job that the National Film Theater does in London. I thought perhaps this would happen when Lincoln Center was built, but it didn't.

VOGEL: I would say that if such a theater existed, it would be subject to the same economic law. It either has to be supported by foundation grants on a continuing basis, or it has to be a self-sustaining film society large enough to do this kind of thing.

ADAMS: I don't know of any foundation that is supporting this field.

CLARKE: They're hopeless!

ADAMS: I'd like to ask why foreign films are cut, tailored, "improved" by distributors.

HARRISON: Well, I'll tell you why. In New York you have a very unique group of men among the distributors. Some of them believe

after they present the film that they *made* the film. [*Laughter.*] And a man who never got close to a camera will tell you that you ought to cut it here and here.

ADAMS: Do you think they improve the films at all?

HARRISON: There are a lot of nitwits who think they have a perfect right to tamper with anybody's work, on the theory that they're improving it.

CLARKE: Hear, hear!

HARRISON: And while I think it would be incorrect to say that some films can't stand a little trimming, it all depends on who does the trimming. By and large, films should not be tampered with.

CLARKE: Well, practically any film in the world can take a little nipping and tucking, but it is really up to the film-maker to do it.

KENLY: Think of the success *Wages of Fear* might have had if it had been shown complete.

CLARKE: Yes, you're right; I saw both versions.

ADAMS: I wonder whether we feel that the situation is improving?

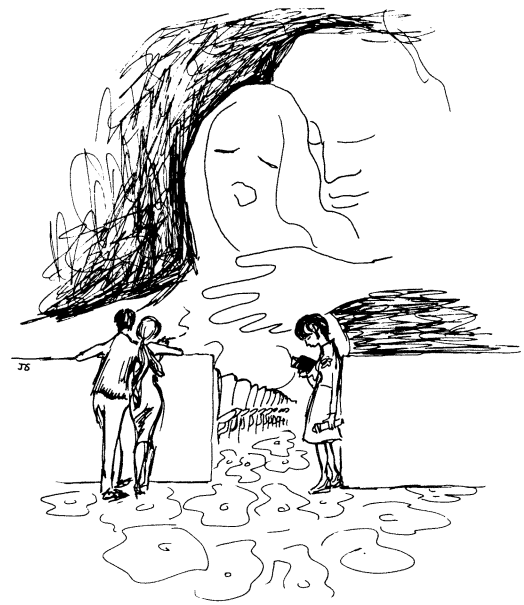
CLARKE: I myself obviously think it is, or I wouldn't be committing myself to making a feature film, unless I'm a nut!

VOGEL: Speaking for myself, I'd say there has definitely been some improvement over the years. I see it in the growth of the art theaters, in the growth of my own audiences, and in the growth of the distribution of such films nationally. There's a definite upward swing.

At the same time, I think it would be disingenuous to be too optimistic about this, because the fundamental structure of the industry has not changed, and there's no reason to believe it will change. I don't go with the critics who think that the existence of independent producers rather than big studios spells millennium. I've seen too many of these independent efforts to be overly optimistic.

CLARKE: We *are* talking about American independent films, in much of this, not just foreign films.

VOGEL: But I think that many of these films, when they get into the mainstream of distribution and exhibition, will meet up with the same problems that other films face. I think you, Shirley, are left with a very interesting dilemma, which was put to me by Henri Storck, the Belgian director. He said, "Look, of course I want



to make money with my films, and I can't continue to make films unless I do make money, that's true." But then he added, "But do you think that if I *wasn't* making money that I wouldn't try to keep making films? I am a creative person. I *have* to." So ultimately this whole discussion rests with you!

CLARKE: No—it rests with us all. There can be plenty of interesting films around. The problem is to get them out.

NOTE: *In future issues* FILM QUARTERLY *will present articles on concrete steps that can be taken to solve the distribution problems described in the above discussion.*

Since the audience for new films, as for the new in any art, must be sought out, educated, and cajoled, the process of growth is bound to be erratic and slow; and it will occur on many fronts. For instance, we applaud the recent

acquisition of theaters by Daniel Talbot and Lionel Rogosin in New York; they are attempting to break the vicious circle at what is perhaps its weakest point—for if audiences can be lured into the theaters in significant numbers, then distribution, finance for new films, and all else follows.

Many other lines of attack must also be explored, however, and we plan to present information in future issues that will be helpful to persons wishing to set up film programs or to fight the good fight by other means. For example, how may we strengthen the influence of museums, universities, film festivals, film societies? How may the economic weight of nontheatrical audiences best be brought to bear to improve distribution—perhaps through coöperative block-booking? How may package and series schemes be set up for communities that cannot support an art theater? How can publicity be improved—both in the sense of devices to supplement advertising, such as direct-mail schedules, and in the sense of better film journalism in magazines, on the radio, and even on television?

Film Reviews

Ashes and Diamonds

(Polish title—*Popiol i Diament.*) A production of the KADR Film Group in Warsaw (1958), directed by Andrzej Wajda. Script: Jerzy Andrzejewski and Wajda from the former's novel. Photography: Jerzy Wojcik. Music: Wroclaw Rhythm Quintet under Filip Nowak. With Zbigniew Cybulski (Maciek), Ewa Krzyzewska (Krystyna), Waclaw Zastrzezynski (Szczuka), Adam Pawlikowski (Andrzej).

In the work of the younger generation of Polish film-makers the abortive Warsaw Rising of 1944 against the German occupation has for several years exercised a strong influence. In a general way it acts perennially as an epic of almost mythic proportions while more particularly for the writers and directors in their own experience it represented a break from childhood. The "undeground" or Home Army as it was known had been the central sabotage and quasi-military organization of resistance in occupied Poland, operating under the direction of the emigré government in London. With the almost immediate establishment of the postwar administration throughout liberated Poland, there was no official impetus to tell the story of what was substantially a politically conservative organization. With the changes in government which began in the fall of 1956, opportunities emerged, and particularly the younger film-makers showed an anxiety to tackle the subject. October 1956 found a cinema in revolt against earlier postwar political pressures to use film as propaganda. The young film-makers were ready to be as committed to the subjects of their films as they were to their private beliefs. They were ready to be engaged but not to conform.

Andrzej Wajda's *Kanal* (1956–57) was an immediate response to the new freedom, and was followed by Andrzej Munk's *Eroica* (1958). Both were written by Jerzy Stawinski, who had been an officer in the underground. The events he described were largely autobiographical. Wajda has said that he made *Kanal* because he himself was too young to take part in the Rising. These two films, and others not so well known, explored and analyzed the fact and the myth of the Rising.

So far, with the possible exception of *Lotna*

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Zbigniew Cybulski flees through a laundry-yard in ASHES AND DIAMONDS.

(1958), all Wajda's work in features has been an expression of a concern with the generation in Poland to which he himself belongs. In *A Generation* (1954, Polish title *Pokolenie*) he told the story of a group of boys living in Warsaw during the occupation. Here his principal concern was to place in juxtaposition the relentless demands of the moment—to fight, scheme and kill—and the youthful romanticism and idealism of his characters. The film was based upon a popular novel by Bohdan Czeszko. His second film *Kanal* took the story a step further, in time and in complexity. Whereas the young partisans escape at the end of *Generation*, in *Kanal* they die without hope in the sewers, die absurdly, and only in the most general sense heroically. And then, in *Ashes and Diamonds*, Wajda brings his attention to one of the young partisans who escaped, who habitually has been taking his orders from the superior officers in the Home Army, and on the first day of peace finds himself still fighting—but this time as an instrument of a political decision—to assassinate the newly arriving secretary of a local Communist Party district. With the surrender of Germany, Poland finds itself divided. Many officers in the Home Army fought for a free Poland, and believed that this still lay ahead of them—somewhere on the other side of the Communist Party's attempt to take over the government.

Again the film is based on a popular novel, by Jerzy Andrzejewski. Written in 1947, it represented an attempt on the part of the author to probe and explain the many personal tragedies which lay behind the social changes in Poland. Andrzejewski was at that time turning away from Catholicism to social action, and his book presented its subject through a clash of the conservative and socialist ideologies. Maciek, the "hero" of this film, then, is simply one of many youths who found themselves still with guns in their hands, still with the ability to kill, but unable or unwilling to face the intellectual or moral problems occasioned by the new shift in social power.

The plot of Wajda's film is simple. It opens with the assassination which, however, misfires since the wrong people (two "innocent" workers from a local factory) are killed. Realizing their

mistake, the two gunmen wait for an opportunity to try again. It is the first night of peace and a banquet is being held in the nearby town; the Communist secretary, Szczuka, is the guest of honor. While they wait for him to retire for the night, Maciek, who will do the actual shooting, reconsiders his position (during a quick affair with a barmaid) but in the end goes through with it and is himself killed. In a moving sequence we watch Szczuka waiting after the banquet to go to a police station where he will meet his young son whom he had left behind during many years of exile. He has just learned that his son has been captured in a round-up of a Home Army contingent. Maciek follows him as he walks to the police station and seizes his opportunity to shoot him in a deserted street. Szczuka does not die at once but staggers forward to Maciek who catches him in his arms, and embraces him. It is a measure of the power of the film that we have at this moment complete sympathy for both men, the younger and the older, and we are moved by Szczuka's death.

Wajda has said in an interview in the Polish weekly *Film* that his object was to show that Maciek, and by extension many others like him, was wrong to fight against the new order. But, he added, in order to show this it is necessary to make the audience love the assassins, rather than hate them.

The lost and corrupted past: from the Polonaise sequence in ASHES AND DIAMONDS.

Thus, as the Polish critic Krzystof Toeplitz has written, the film is a history of one night, a night which separates the two assassinations. The first is a mistake, the second a success, but both are tragic—in themselves and in their consequences. But by the time we witness the second we are in a much better position to judge Maciek than we had been at the beginning. It is probably this which encourages Jerzy Toeplitz, the rector of the Polish State film school at Lodz (from which Wajda graduated), to argue that *Ashes and Diamonds* more than any other film of its generation provides a bridge between Poland and the cinema-goer abroad.

The film is in several ways less satisfactory, *qua* film, than its political and social justification. Most of the action takes place on sets and it is only the occasional exteriors (the first assassination and most of the ending) that retain the neorealist flavor of *A Generation* although a more straightforward style might have been more effective. The settings are often self-consciously stylized; we are too aware of camera angles, of grips just out of frame blowing cigarette smoke in front of a night club-singer, and sometimes, within a scene, of the awkward cutting. Some of the character developments —particularly those of Maciek—are hard to follow, and no doubt worked better in the novel. It is really not good enough to change a character from thoughtless to reluctant killer primarily through the love of a lonely girl, and the accidental reading of an ancient scripture.*

* The title—literally *Ashes and the Diamond*—derives from this verse by Norwid:

So often are you as a blazing torch
With flakes of burning hemp falling about you
Flaming, you know not if flames bring freedom
Or Death, consuming all that you most cherish,
If cinders only will be left,
And want, chaos or tempest shall engulf.
Or will the cinders hold the glory of a starlike diamond
The morning Star of everlasting triumph.

And at the close it is hard to believe in the cause of Maciek's death (he panics and is shot down by soldiers who have no knowledge of who he is or what he has done).

Maciek himself is interestingly played by Zbigniew Cybulski, also the hero of *Eighth Day of the Week* (*F.Q.*, Winter, 1959) rather in the manner of James Dean. Almost always wearing dark glasses—a souvenir, as he says, of an unhappy love for his country, when he spent all his time in the sewers—he takes an increasing hold of the story as it develops, and accordingly of our interest and sympathy. The method actor's manner of contorting himself when he has to show that he is thinking goes a little awkwardly with some of the other more traditional acting styles in the film. But although Wajda may have made errors of style he has made a serious attempt to find an appropriate structure for his story. The scenes develop convincingly and Wajda often makes telling use of his opportunities to contrast the quiet, thoughful concern of the party officials, worried about their ability to handle their new power, with the easy opportunism of the burghers, the selfish desire for expatriation of the upper bourgeoisie, and the earlier moral and intellectual laziness and immaturity of Maciek. He fails, however, to make convincing the various encounters Maciek has with his unfortunate victims and their survivors, and the film towards the end becomes bogged down and excessively ponderous and repetitive.

But in the end, Polish cinema is a cinema of ideology, and neither the older nor younger film-makers show much desire to avoid this. Their films always make us aware of the context of a crumbling Christian society against which the characters move and live and love. Their films ask to be judged in terms of the issues they raise as much as in purely artistic terms. Since the dominant, officially accepted style after the war, socialist realism, came inevitably to be associated in the minds of the younger directors and writers with official prudence, it is hardly surprising that since 1956 there has been a search for style and a general unevenness of approach. Wajda's films, being close to the feelings and moods of the people, have reportedly been successful with the public, and his work has at least shown a consistency of development. He followed *Ashes and Diamonds* with *Lotna* (*Swift*), the story of the Polish Uhlans in the campaign of September, 1939, based on a short story of Wojciech Zukrowski. Subsequently he made *The Innocent Magicians* (*Niewinni Czarodzieje*), again with a screenplay by Andrzejewski, and again about the problems of contemporary youth. (A similar subject is being treated in a film by Janusz Morgenstern, *See You Tomorrow*, whose script was written, in part, by actor Cybulski.) Wajda has also made two shorts, a study of the work of the Polish sculptor Dunikowski, *I Journey to the Sun* (*Ide do Slonca*), and a compilation war documentary *The Roll-Call of the Fallen* (*Apel Poleglych*).—COLIN YOUNG

Eroica

Director: Andrzej Munk. Scenario: Jerzy S. Stawinski. Photography: J. Wojcik. Music: Jan Krenz. A KADR unit production for Film Polski. With (Part I) B. Polomska, W. Dziewonski; (Part II) K. Rudzki, J. Nowak, R. Klosowski, W. Siemion, J. Kostecki.

Eroica is in reality two films, the first comic in a macabre and painful way, the second unmitigatedly terrible. Their juxtaposition is, of course, a deliberate comment in itself.

A Scherzo in the Polish Manner, the first part, mixes the helterskelter deadliness of the Warsaw Uprising with the personal troubles of a man who finds himself (very unheroically) serving as courier between the Poles and a Hungarian unit wishing to come over to the Polish side, but unwilling to do so unless guaranteed protection when the Russians finally arrive. ("Who will push Jerry out?" one character asks. "*They* will," another replies; "That's the Polish tragedy.") His frisky wife has been carrying on an affair with one of the Hungarian officers while he was away; now she expects

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him to take care of her again. He crosses the lines several times, on one occasion very drunk, having come across a cache of liquor while passing the time with an old girl-friend. He staggers across the battle area, miraculously avoiding getting hit. For a few minutes the comedy becomes deliciously grotesque: he urinates from behind a tree while bullets spatter nearby; the air is filled with feathers from chickens getting in the line of fire; he sits by a stream to bathe his aching head and a monstrous tank quietly creeps up behind him—as he throws the last empty bottle over his shoulder the tank-men laugh and he panics utterly as the huge cannon of the tank swivels meaningfully toward him.

The film is neatly but offhandedly constructed: a series of peregrinations by the hero. He confronts along the way the worthlessness of his wife, the sticky complexity of politics, the curious fascist attitude of the young Poles who suspect him of being a spy, the lost hopes of his girl friend, and above all the desolation and wreckage of the war (only in the suburban scenes are there any buildings left standing; all the exteriors in Warsaw itself take place amid rubble). His cheerful cynicism—a metropolitan and cosmopolitan air which perhaps irritated Stalinist critics as much as anything in the film—is the only consistently human response one can conceive to all this, aside from utter despair.

Consistently unhuman responses are the matter of the second part of *Eroica*, which has been called *Lugubrious Obstinacy*. Here a group of Polish officers, incarcerated by the Germans in Oflag for up to five years, exist in a kind of magnified *No Exit* situation. They have no privacy; they cannot bear one another; they exist on the thread of dignity provided by the only escape ever managed from this camp—a heroic deed which, we soon learn, was fictional (the supposed escapee is holed up in the attic, and two of the prisoners are sharing their food with him in secret).

While the first part of *Eroica* is soberly documentary in style, with much gunfire, trudging refugees, and physical destruction, the second attains a nightmare intensity of images in spite of a much more constricted locale: the world of the film in fact comprises only the camp yard, the barracks interior, and a tiny corner of the attic. This world is to that of *Stalag 17* somewhat as *The Grapes of Wrath's* is to that of *Our Town*. For these men have come so near to the point of psychological collapse that a terrific strain pervades even the slightest action. And if the daytimes are bad, the nights are ghastly: with the endless sweep of the searchlights, the breathing, the sleeplessness reflecting hopeless tension, the mutual suspicion. As they confront each other over a windfall of cigarettes, Turek, one of the men hiding the supposed escapee, cries out, "You look like a pack of apes!" Only Zak, bearded and half-mad when we first see him, retains his dignity—slamming the door of an odd little reading booth constructed out of packing cases; and in the end Zak, after creeping through the barbed wire while the guards are distracted by a mock fistfight but letting two passing peasant women lead him back in, simply walks insanely out into the yard and is shot down; the camera draws back as if to the guard tower and we see him lying there, like a dead insect.

(Upon a concrete circle in that yard the prisoners take their exercise, wheeling around and around, dark, drab figures against the geometrical Teutonic pattern, shuffling, lifeless: it is this image on which the film ends, to let this above all sink into the spectator's eyes and mind.)

Another scene in this part oddly combines ludicrousness and horror. One of the two young prisoners whom we have seen entering the camp receives his first food parcel, and bets with an older man that he will eat it all at one sitting. He begins with gusto, while the experienced prisoner sits by, smiling. He makes great inroads, in fact; other men gather around. Faintly, one hears a cough from the attic; Turek grabs his mandolin and begins to play, frantically, to cover the sound. Zak knocks open the door of his cubicle and yells for quiet; the racket only increases. Finally the boy, with only three or four spoonfuls to go, is seized by nausea and bolts, amid laughter.

"Shall we ever live like human beings again?" someone asks.

And this is the question asked, indeed, by both parts of *Eroica*. In the first, the hero rushes off to rejoin his friend in more dismal fighting, leaving his wife calling out "Don't leave me alone, Petsy!" In the second, we are left with the foreclosed future of the men walking in a circle.

This is not, of course, inspirational in any obvious sense, and Munk received sharp criticism from at least one Soviet critic, R. Youreniew, for his "formalism and pessimism." But if, as Munk and the Poles who applauded *Eroica* seem to do, one takes film for a serious art and not an instrument of simple education, the question is one that drama implicitly must often raise, and sometimes answer. And it is from their persistent consciousness of this that the Polish film-makers have drawn their strength. The fierce humor and the expressionist force of *Eroica's* two parts both spring from a healthy unwillingness to turn away from life toward pleasanter fictions. —ERNEST CALLENBACH

Ikiru

Director: Akira Kurosawa. Screenplay: Hideo Oguni, Shinobu Hashimoto, Akira Kurosawa. Photography: Asaichi Nakai. Décor: So Matsuyama. Score: Fumio Yawoguchi Toho. American distributor: Brandon. With Takashi Shimura, Miki Odagiri.

Of the series of six Japanese films recently shown in New York by Brandon Films, it is rather surprising that the film to win the widest popular support was Akira Kurosawa's *Ikiru* (To Live!). Surprising, because this long (2 hours and 20 minutes) film about a minor government employee dying of cancer does not, on the surface, suggest itself as subject matter for a popular success. That it enjoyed a successful run, however, is gratifying indication that recognition of *Ikiru* as a masterpiece of film-making was not restricted to critical acclaim.

Kurosawa's directorial prowess was recognized when *Rashomon* burst with the force of a new discovery on the Western world. *Seven Samurai,* though less immediately overwhelming, corroborated our first impressions, but so far we have had little opportunity to assess Kurosawa (or Japanese films as a whole, for that matter) in anything more contemporary than the period pieces that many people associate with, and think typical of, Japanese film-making. The recent series in New York was intended to bridge that gap by offering films on contemporary aspects of Japanese life, although the scheduled two-week run for each film had to be abandoned in the face of poor critical and audience reception for several of the films. Of the six shown, the three films by Kurosawa—*Drunken Angel, The Men Who Tread on the Tiger's Tail,* and *Ikiru*—were the most interesting. *Drunken Angel,* with another of Toshiro Mifune's striking performances, ably aided by Takashi Shimura, suggested a deeper probing of postwar Japanese life than one expected in a story of a tubercular petty racketeer and the drunken doctor who tries to save him despite himself, but its effect was weakened by a slightly sentimental approach and by an apparent derivation in style from gangster films of the West. *The Men Who Tread on the Tiger's Tail,* completed in 1945 but barred from exhibition until 1953, was advertised as a parody of a *kabuki* drama, but its effect was less than complete on a Western audience which was not familiar enough with the original form to fully appreciate the parody. Running barely an hour, the film, with its stylization and theatricality, served to reveal another facet of Kurosawa's talent and provided an interesting contrast to his other films shown. But even though the full effect of the film was lost, the humanism that pervades all of Kurosawa's work was evident in his treatment of the story.

That humanism was very much at the heart of *Ikiru* as it followed a petty bureaucratic official, Kanji Watanabe (portrayed by Takashi Shimura in an impressive and beautifully modulated performance), in his efforts to discover some meaning to his life when he realizes that he has only a short time left to live. Dehumanized by the soulless routine of his job, he has

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Akira Kurosawa (left) directing IKIRU.

actually been dead as a human being for twenty-five years, but it is the reality of approaching death that makes this fact clear to him and sends him on his quest for some purpose to his existence. His efforts to establish contact with the son for whom he has sacrificed so much are rebuffed and misunderstood. Seeking release and human contact through a sensual riot, he latches on to a Mephistophelean writer who conducts him through a hellish *Walpurgisnacht* of dissipation, but he finds no answer therein. Only with a young girl, an ex-employee of his office, does he discover any companionship and any purpose. Her pleasure in the simple task of making toys for children provides him with the example that leads him to complete the final action of his life—the conversion of a waste area into a playground despite almost overwhelming bureaucratic opposition.

This fairly simple story is handled in a complex manner. A narrator's voice accompanies the opening shot of an X-ray, dispassionately explaining to us the gastric ulcer that will cost Mr. Watanabe his life and plunging us immediately into the situation. This coldly objective voice returns later to explain facts directly to the audience and to bluntly announce Mr. Watanabe's death. The film switches abruptly from present to past and back again through quick flashbacks as the central figure recalls episodes from his life—his wife's death, his adolescent son disappointing him in a school baseball game, that son's departure for the front during the war. For about two-thirds of the picture we follow the viewpoint of Mr. Watanabe, but with nearly an hour of the film still to go Kurosawa makes what is certainly a daring move. The whole last part of the film is constructed around the wake for the deceased and our attention is transferred to his family, his fellow employees, the deputy mayor and other officials. The sudden change in point of view detracts from the unity of the picture by breaking the film into two parts, but this weakness is offset by the brilliance with which Kurosawa handles this final episode. From slowly paced scenes and stretches of almost unbearable silence, the tempo gradually accelerates as the mourners

discuss the deceased and his efforts in pushing through the playground project. Bits and pieces of information supplied by those present at the wake, revealed to the audience through flashbacks, explain his character and actions to his puzzled colleagues as the sake flows more freely and the talk becomes more animated. This episode is remarkable for its variety of characterizations: the opportunistic mayor, the misunderstanding son and brother, the querulous bewilderment of one employee, the sober, quiet dignity of the one friend who truly understands Watanabe, the heartfelt grief of a group of women from the playground area, the maudlin sentimentality and self-pity with which the tipsy mourners promise to benefit from Watanabe's example. Kurosawa has set himself a problem in allowing so much of his film to rest on this one scene of action. But his treatment of this section—the revelation of character, the slow dramatic buildup, the subtle variation in camera setups and groupings of characters, the use of silence and sound—makes it a real *tour de force.*

The film has other merits also. Some of the flashbacks are remarkable for their compression of feeling, particularly those where past memories crowd on Mr. Watanabe in the silence of his room. Montage, camera angles, sounds, and lighting all combine in the "nighttown" sequence to produce a picture of overwhelming horror and vulgarity in which Watanabe's tearful, drunken singing of a sentimental love song from his youth stands out as a moment of purity among the blaring jazz, a strip-tease dancer, the predatory prostitutes, the packed mass of humanity swaying together on the dance floor, the jukeboxes and flashing lights. On the other hand, there is a tenderness and a great depth of perception in the treatment of the scenes between Watanabe and the young girl he befriends (a delightful performance by Miki Odagiri). His fumbling attempts to establish rapport with her are thwarted when the girl, bewildered by his attentions, repulses his offer of friendship. Their final meeting together in the restaurant is possibly the film's finest individual scene. The gap between the generations, already indicated in the relationship with the son, and the isolation of one individual from another are beautifully illustrated in Watanabe's desperate attempts to hold on to life through this girl and to discover her secret of unabashed joyfulness and simple pleasure in the most commonplace events. She never really comprehends his needs, and she recoils in revulsion from the announcement of his impending death. All she can convey to him is her simple-minded pleasure in manufacturing cheap little toys that will bring pleasure to someone. A counterpoint to the poignant irony of this scene is provided by the birthday celebration for a young girl being held in the background. The total effect is quite overpowering.

Aside from providing a revealing glimpse of postwar Japan, *Ikiru* probes the heart and mind of an individual on a scale that far transcends national boundaries. Perhaps a reason as simple as this accounts for its acceptance by critics and audiences alike. Kurosawa has endowed the film with compassion and understanding, with an ironic awareness of human weaknesses and a knowledge of the dignity of the individual. Certainly *Ikiru* stands in the front rank of contemporary cinematic art; along with Satyajit Ray's trilogy it is one of the most powerful humanistic documents the screen has yet presented.—WILLIAM BERNHARDT

From the "nighttown" sequence of Kurosawa's IKIRU, *with Takashi Shimura (right).*

The Music Room

Original title: *Jalsaghar*. Directed by Satyajit Ray. With Chobi Biswas, Padma Devi, Tulsi Lahiri.

The first Moscow film festival held this last August was pretty much of a bust no matter which way you look at it. What saves it from being consigned to total oblivion is the fact that it presented a new Satyajit Ray film, *The Music Room*, to the world. Though selected by the Soviets for most of the wrong reasons, based on a determined Marxist misreading of its content, and projected under almost comically bad conditions, the film was one of those rare events—a genuinely great work of art.

Ray, who has already made three very remarkable works, here treats a quite different milieu and material. His other films—*Pather Panchali*, *Aparajito*, and *The World of Apu*, form a kind of unified triptych of childhood, adolescence, and young manhood. *The Music Room* leisurely and patiently unfolds the story of the decline of the last member of a once mighty Indian noble family, revealing the man's character by quiet, ever-acute observation. The film has the quality and complexity usually reserved to an extremely good novel, without losing any of the visual beauty inherent to a first-rate motion picture. In its way, despite the foreign setting and details of Indian life which occasionally are quite alien to us, the film is, in its spirit, close to a number of Chekhov's later short stories or to Joyce's *Dubliners*: in it a man's life is epiphanized in an hour and a half of film. We are shown all the weaknesses of the man; his vanity, his self-deception, his total inability to adjust or adapt to any kind of life different from that to which he has always been accustomed. Yet we are also shown, with compassion and wisdom, a fellow human being whom we can understand, forgive, and with whom we can identify.

There is scarcely any plot at all in the conventional sense, yet at the end the viewer feels he has seen a man's entire life laid out before him and has come to understand not just the man's character, but something essential to life itself. Gently the film follows the shallow movements of this life; suddenly, from time to time, picking up a detail of almost frighteningly profound and true observation. Ray's view is serene, but never unmoved; deeply felt but never sentimental.

The images give us the pattern of the man's existence. The splendid colonnaded mansion set in the middle of an empty, dusty plain; a large elephant browsing on the uncut lawn. The elaborate musical evenings with all the intricate social rites, and responses of the host and guests to the music. The intimations of decreasing wealth. The noble's affection for his only son, being reared to live the same idle life as himself. The departure of his wife and son on a long trip to visit her parents.

The storm on the day of their return, and the wonderfully, delicately created balance of the man's fear and superstition about their safety crossing the vast nearby lake. A tiny inlaid barque carelessly knocked off a table becomes a frightening omen of disaster. Ray builds with a fine instinct the man's struggle with his sense of dread, which mounts until he sees—in a brilliantly shot close-up—an insect fall into his water glass; he watches horrified as it drowns with frantic thrashing. He then is hopelessly convinced of impending doom for his family. He sits distraught, in a kind of moral suspension, through the concert in his music room. Outside a servant slowly bears the drowned body of the son to the house.

Characteristically, Ray passes over the opportunity for the big scene—no confrontation with the body, no funeral. Only the man several years later, his enthusiasm and interest in life somehow imperceptibly but definitively broken. The mansion is clearly run down; the servants reduced to a handful, but there is no pathos.

Ray has the unusual gift of creating, as perhaps no other film director does, a very real sense of the passing of time, of life, which is one of the most difficult problems for a filmmaker when faced with presenting a story which covers the span of many years. This, Ray achieves by an adroit selection of details and

moments which serve, as it were, to sum up almost casually an attitude or phase of behavior which is indicative of an individual's entire character.

Invited by an obsequious *nouveau-riche* neighbor to attend a concert at the neighbor's home, he thinks again with longing of music and the ritual of the music room, and suddenly with complete, splendid impracticality makes the grand gesture of deciding to hold a concert in his home again. Some of the silverware is sold for food and drinks, the room refurbished, the finest dancer engaged. At the close of the evening, he gives his last purse to the dancer, reducing himself to poverty. Ray and his actor manage to convey perfectly the feeling of the utter foolishness of the gesture, its nobility, the dignity of the man, and his malicious sense of satisfaction at having put his parvenu neighbor in his place, without either condemning or admiring the man.

With the guests gone he strides proudly about the music room. With his pride is the knowledge of what he has long refused to admit: he is now finally, literally ruined, and this is indeed the last concert he will ever hold in the room. He toasts the portraits of his forebears in English, "To you, oh, my noble ancestors!" A spider suddenly skitters across his own portrait, and as he responds in superstitious horror to this, all the guttering candles in the room flicker and die out. To re-affirm life and to suppress his own fears of death he calls for his long-unridden horse, and he rides down to the lakeside in the pale morning light. As he approaches the beach he sees a boat drawn up on the sands, and as his horse rears in surprise his face shows both terror and acceptance as if he realizes the long-overturned barque and his son's death were inevitably linked to his own destiny. A few minutes later his two old servants find his body by the boat where the horse threw him.

The Music Room revealed for me, more than almost any other film I can think of, the wonderful, quite unexplored potential of its medium. Very few films have grasped and projected a man's character with such intelligence, simplicity, wit, and art. There's no sex, no sentimentality, really no action to speak of, certainly no chases, no shattering emotions, no big moments; none of the trappings with which even most of the best films today seem unfortunately to be hung in some form or other. Yet by the end of Ray's film, one knows and understands that man with an insight and comprehension that one rarely has for another human being. It makes something like Bergman's *Wild Strawberries* look like a terribly facile exercise—which it is, of course, compared to the rest of Bergman's work.

There probably won't be many films made in the near future which will resemble *The Music Room*; its serenity and sobriety pretty much rule it out as fare for contemporary audience tastes. But it's good to know such a film has been made, if only to prove that the motion picture is a much richer and subtler medium than we had thought.

—Cynthia Grenier

Jungfrukällan

(Possible English title: The Well of the Virgin) Directed by Ingmar Bergman. Story: Ulla Isaksson. Gamera: Sven Nykvist. Music: Erik Nordgren. Svenski Filmindustri. The Swedish title is pronounced "Yoong-fru-chailen.")

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JUNGFRUKÄLLAN:
Top: Gunnel Lindblom as Ingeri and Birgitta Petterson as Karin.
Bottom: Max von Sydow as Herr Töre and Birgitta Valberg as Fru Märeta.

brook," said the White Knight. "I'll see you safe to the end of the wood—and then I must go back, you know. That's the end of my move." — LEWIS CARROLL.

With *Jungfrukällan*, Ingmar Bergman has moved without further hesitation into the deep crucial places of tragic art, into the abiding forest which surrounds our daytime and gives the lie to our belief that all contingent evils can be socialized away. *Tores dotter i Vänge*, a fourteenth-century narrative ballad, is the source of the film: like a host of its contemporaries it recounts a grimly universal anecdote, in 32 bald couplets with preceding and concluding refrains. Karin Toresdotter, a maiden on her way to church for confirmation, is raped and murdered by three men in a forest glade; a spring of water rises and flows beneath her dead body, and her father kills the offenders. No devices of characterization or suspense, no scenery, no psychological elaboration. On this stark basis, Bergman conceived a film nearly as simple in story line as its source. But he so enriched and intensified each detail that the whole becomes unbearably fraught with potency and terror, and with pity that opens one to the bone.

The manuscript is by Ulla Isaksson. How much its execution owes to Bergman's supervision we may never know. That he respects her share there's no doubt, for her name is above his on all posters and production lists. Important modifications of the ballad story, to enlarge its depth and scope, include changing one of the three rapists to a small boy who is sacrificed to the father's wrath with the two men. Herr Tore's household has been augmented by an aunt and by a step-sister, Ingeri, who figures as a dark angel of doom, the ostensible initiator of the cycle of evil. Ingeri is pregnant and husbandless: her envy of the undespoiled Karin is her incentive for putting a curse on the girl's pilgrimage. An old bridgekeeper, spirit of the backward-looking world of pagan oblivion, is Ingeri's *paterfamilias*; he and a garrulous, clairvoyant beggar, lodging at Herr Tore's, complete the cast.

The film's action transpires in little more than 24 hours, from one cockcrow at dawn to another and beyond—into sunlight. Prayer begins and ends the film, prayer is a dramatic motif in between. When Karin innocently spreads a feast for the three herdsmen who have greeted her in the wood, she recites a grace before offering them bread. (The bread should be a token of communion but contains a live toad placed there by Ingeri.) Subsequently the boy is terrified when the three prepare to eat at Herr Tore's house, where they've unwittingly lodged for the

night: the rhymed grace, fearful echo of the day's crime, is repeated.

> "O valsignade Jesus, Gud Fader's son
> Du ar det levande brod som fran
> himmeln kom."

(O blessed Jesus, Son of the Good Father, thou art the living bread sent from Heaven.) The opening prayer of the film is pagan (i.e., Norse), the last, Christian. Each is accompanied by its elemental analogy—fire and water. Ingeri fanning the fire with which she bakes the bread as she invokes the dread influence of Odin is the first image we see. Her line "Ode Kom, Ode Kom, Jag vill satta dej till tjanst!" (Come, Odin, come, I have dire work for you!") is countered by the next speech from her stepfather, praying to a crucifix with his wife, Fru Mareta. "Gud Fader, Son och helgeand . . ." And in the terminating scene the family kneels in the glade where Karin's body lies, the magic fountain bubbling from the earth, and Tore promising a God, whose ways he doesn't understand, to build a church on the spot.

A river separates the forest Karin enters from the more open country across which Ingeri accompanies her. Ingeri lingers at the bridge with the "nameless" watchman (either he had no Christian baptism or he has renounced it) who worships the household gods of Thor and Odin and claims he can hear what people say "in the water." Before Tore slaughters his three "guests" he first purifies himself with a *sauna* (fire and water), and he kills the Thin One of the three by strangling him in the flames of the hearth. Whispering his visions of damnation and salvation to the wakeful boy, the clairvoyant beggar employs the metaphor of smoke for the virgin, Karin. Fire and water, earth and the birds of the air: succession and compounding of the elements, each mingled with or consuming the other, as all the characters in the cycle are linked by blood and death.

But the master image is the embrace, of which the rape itself—the most unmitigated visualization ever presented in a movie—is the central version and gross travesty: the girl's strained face as she is used by the two men (the boy, at one point, squat-capers over her body) expresses an agony in which there's a remote hint of pleasure. Karin is embraced by her father before leaving the house, Ingeri and Karin embrace at the bridge, the lecherous bridge-keeper tries to assault Ingeri but is easily repulsed. (She flees from Odin's emissary only to witnesss, remorseful yet fascinated, her sister's catastrophic embrace which she believes she herself has predestined.) Again, the beggar's face is pressed close to the boy's as he croaks his prophecies of the youngster's last sleep, and Tore and his victims, especially the Thin One in the flames, are locked in lethal intercourse. Technically "innocent," the terrified boy rushes to Fru Mareta's arms for protection before the avenger tears him away and hurls him to the wall. Finally, Tore and his wife are linked by grief in a triple embrace with the dead Karin.

Jungfrukällan is a visually lucid archetype; the meaning is explicit at the surface, universal in depth. It demands the kind of attention necessary for listening to an Elizabethan lyric, for example; it requires no references extrinsic to the film except an awareness that fourteenth-century Sweden was reluctantly exchanging Norse religion for Christian—else you may dismiss the ominous raven (a familiar of Odin, or Wotan) as a theatrical symbol filched from Edgar Allan Poe! Despite the primordial atmosphere of fright and violence, *Jungfrukällan* is as strictly composed as a sonnet, pictorially: each image contains, predicts or recalls every other image—the sustained reverberation of a bell in which the original note and the final overtone sound as a continuum to the ear. This is the most compactly visual of all Bergman's films, the dialogue more sparse even that that of *Gycklarnas Afton* (The Naked Night), the narration as artfully paced.

To every episode the setting has an inseparably just relationship: the flame-lit kitchen of Herr Tore's house; the shining lakes and meadows of Karin's ride on her white horse; the dense forest where the criminals of Pan lurk (they herd goats, the glib thin one plays a jew's-harp, the other, who murders her, is tongueless, a Caliban); the sunbright clearing in which Karin

breaks bread and thereby assures her doom; the smoke-silvery hillside before dawn, crowned by a birch sapling uprooted for Tore's purification ceremony; the bare dining room, photographed frontally in one shot like a Renaissance "Last Supper," with its crudely wrought dais on which the father sits, guarded by carved totems, reminiscent of Viking prows; the cavernous gloom of the *stuga*, brief shelter to the three before they're roused to be murdered.

Camera *placement*, rather than camera movement, determines the film style of Bergman: his world is a human world, one of close-up faces and atmospheric setting; inanimate objects signify without being underlined, as it were, in the visual flow. Poetry in *Jungfrukällan* is born in the ritual image where the character and his action co-exist fatefully and stir our recognition or announce a motif. As Karin first moves to escape from the physical peril which she has at last recognized as threatening her, she attempts to thrown herself through the branches of a young bent tree; she lands in mid-air, so to speak, held up buoyantly but helplessly by the branches, from which the two men lightly pluck her, as if she were a wingless bird balanced on a twig. After the deed, cramped, dirt-covered and broken, she staggers aimlessly back and forth, struggling with a ghastly noise in her throat, half sob, half bray, her face raised pitifully to the sun. This is one of those indelible moments of the cinema, wherein all human agony seems to be concentrated—like Dreyer's Joan staring down at her shorn locks or up at the unimprisoned birds; the taunting of the samurai by his bride in *Rashomon*; Gelsomina's breakdown in *La Strada*.

It looked for a while, five or six years ago, as if Bergman would never "make it": never cut loose from the world of lively chatter and his perennial honeymoon with often sophomoric "ideas." By international standards most of his films were intelligent but in *Torment* and *The Naked Night* he had gone deeper than intelligence and drowned his books, only to surface again, in 1954 as in 1945, as if to evade the native materials which served, in different ways, Arne Sucksdorff, Gustav Molander, Alf Sjöberg, Arne Mattsson. He was closer to home in the medieval-setting film, *The Seventh Seal*; but by comparison with *Jungfrukällan* it's clear that he was still working from the outside, *abstracting* the method of his predecessors.* But he'd hit the vein he needed. *Ansiktet* (The Magician) proved he had acquired the primary spirit of a major film-maker: it confused his advocates. Yet even that film gave no hint of the plunge he'd take next, into the legendary past of his country, using a ballad as rudimentary, as naked of nuance as the rugged wooden crucifixes which to this day hang in thousands of Swedish country churches—the only art-objects in Sweden as irreducible as the film itself.

Ironically, Bergman's finest movies have been made, and prospered, in the teeth of the society which sponsors them—even as Fellini's. They flow diametrically against the main moral current of the day. No surprise: a masterpiece is usually eruptive and is radical only in that it has deep roots. The *profound* movies have never been contemporary in an obvious sense; a maturing artist is never satisfied with local habitations; his destiny is not merely to report on existing contexts but to recover forgotten ones. *Jungfrukällan* is a rebuke to the shallow waters whereon the face of contemporary Sweden is reflected, a reminder that under the facile and passionless surface deep springs run, buried: springs of the primal life in which, like the bridge-keeper, you can hear the voices of the dead. The subjects of their lamentation and their praise resist the dry amenities of "cooperative planning," for they are the unalterable subjects: desire, violation, revenge, death and resurrection—someone else's resurrection.

However, the falsest of all securities would be to conclude that *Jungfrukällan* announces Bergman's theological acquiescence. His film is

* Especially Molander's *Ride Tonight* (1942) with its background of a thwarted peasants' rebellion in 1650. Even Bergman's figure of Death closely resembled the executioner player by Erik Hell in Molander's film.

spiritually consoling only if you're prepared to acknowledge the somewhat bitter truth that evil, propagating itself dynamically, begets love, and that both these forces survive through the perpetual sacrifice of innocence. Bergman's Christian miracle is a metaphor, not a reversion.

—VERNON YOUNG

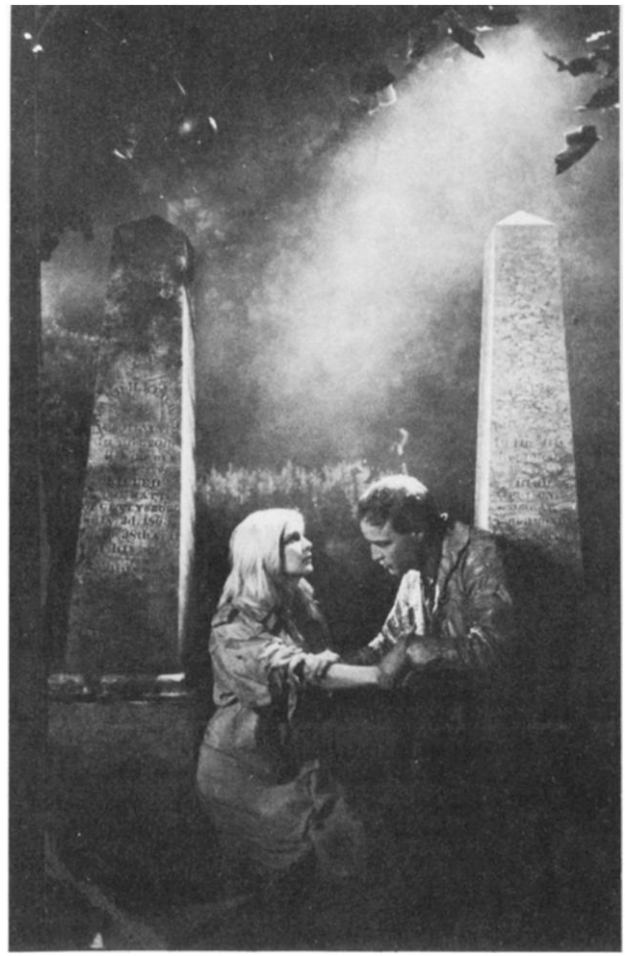
The Fugitive Kind

Director: Sidney Lumet. Producers: Martin Jurow and Richard Shepherd. Script: Tennessee Williams and Meade Roberts. Photography: Boris Kaufman. Music: Kenyon Hopkins. With Marlon Brando, Anna Magnani, Joanne Woodward.

However variable they were in artistic qualities, Jean Cocteau's plays and films about Orpheus and Oedipus (as well as Tristan) were concerned with the vitality of a great tradition of values, at whose center, it seems, is situated the artist-nature and its agonies: the archetypal Orpheus, who was a great man because a great musician. Whatever the ambiguities of Cocteau's modern Orpheus (who seems a poet-laureate in the throes of hatching a Victor Hugo from a Rimbaud), we can accept his impersonator's literary genius on the visionary plane of an agile quasi-Surrealist method. Almost alone, Cocteau has ensured the vigorous survival of antique myths through creatively reinvesting them in modern times and places.

Quite another problem is now tossed at us from the big screen where Marlon Brando as Tennessee Williams' Orpheus is actually, if paradoxically, found in the Elvis Presley tradition of folk music gone bobby-sox, and where Anna Magnani, as a bargain-counter Eurydice, bears a most disarming resemblance to the barbaric "white goddess," Cybele—i.e., to her own Seraphina of *The Rose Tattoo*.

One cannot deny that Williams' present formula sustains an original inflection: so original that he seems to depend for his effects not, as it were, on the culture of his audiences so much as on their *lack* of culture. That is, it seems an asset, loosely speaking, for the audience to be more aware of the evident genealogical link between Val Xavier, the itinerant café entertainer, and Elvis Presley, than of that between Val and the classic Orpheus. Has Williams saved himself, as a popular author, from unnecessary embarrassment—or has he perhaps plunged his movie, even more than he did his play, into weighty mystification? The latter seems to be the sad case—not owing to the movie's conceivable success in creating a pervasive tragic gloom



THE FUGITIVE KIND: *Marlon Brando tells Joanne Woodward that he could break her like a little bird.*

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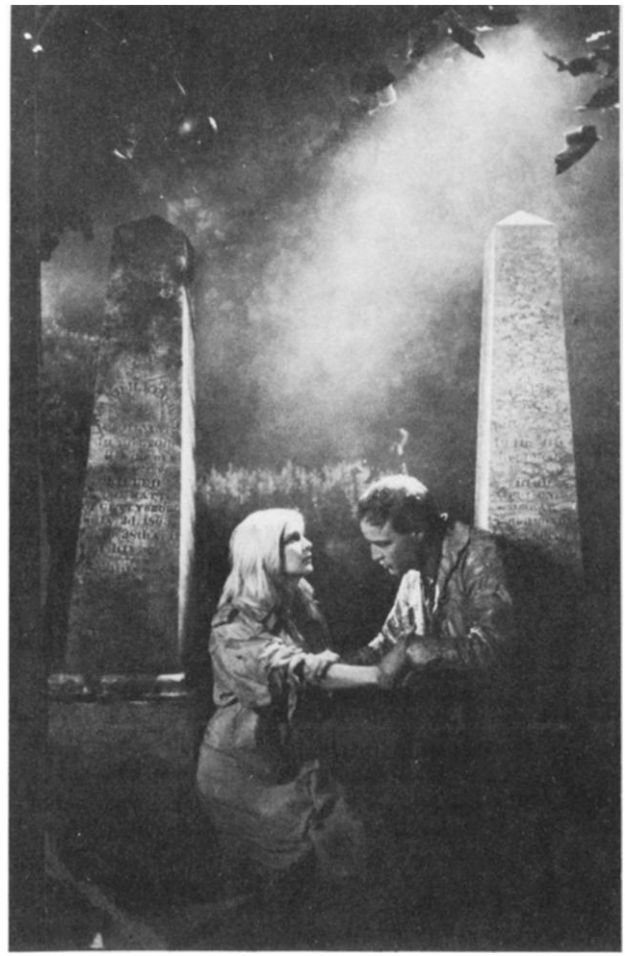

THE FUGITIVE KIND: *Marlon Brando tells Joanne Woodward that he could break her like a little bird.*

(it doesn't succeed there) but to the fact that Val, underneath his grossly naïve, comical boasts of unique physical virtues (including the priapic) is a depressed and unconscious psychoneurotic; this makes his beauty a thoroughly embarrassing factor. Val is one of the misfits of the great Open Road, and the fact that his lifetime racket is playing a guitar for his keep is one of those acutely pathetic things about life in general and the theatrical world in particular.

For Val, in the person of Brando, *is* a beauty; he has been calculatingly lit to look classic in the film's first few minutes when he appears on the screen alone. (The photography is often stark and "imposing.") If, perhaps, the audience as a whole *were* aware of this point, the awareness would only further impede its comprehension of Val and his ensuing story. What might one think of his story *minus* the encompassing tradition of the Orpheus legend? After all, the original play script does not contain the name Orpheus; only the title does. Perhaps the play's title, *Orpheus Descending,* only indicates the author's wrily publicized private opinion that this is a *satyric* (in the old sense) comedown for the legendary master of magic music. I should agree with him there. Yet, perhaps, it is the great pity of an Orpheus "descending" which he wants his play to reveal and embody. Surely, Williams' work has always had more "pity" – and intelligent observation – than the new Beat literature, but this pity is always hopelessly marred by his idiosyncratic sensationalism and sentimentality: qualities fatal to tragic motives.

Williams has always been a frustrated poet also; this very play was originally a much more "poetic" and highstepping affair, and could easily have been taken as redhot avant-garde stuff in the off-Broadway theater, if Williams had not sat down to stage-carpenter both form and substance for a wider public. In the film, it has been further stage-carpentered, and with serious revisions that might well upset cultish admirers of its signally unsuccessful presentation on Broadway. Raw sexuality, with its more esoteric nuances congenial to our Freud-educated era, is the one solid métier Williams apparently does not abandon. More erotic innuendoes issue from Val's lips than does heavenly music from his guitar. These alone, portraying Val as a "fugitive kind" that is really in flight from the mental clinic, are picturesque and amusing enough to make him an arresting theatrical "exhibit." But that is unjust to Williams' higher or "Orphic" intention.

Considering all the poetic-symbolic innuendoes with which the dialogue and action are strewn, there is nothing to do but face the problem at the author's level rather than the mass audience's. The small-town environment of the deep South, with its all too familiar "Gothic" barbarism, has been compelled to play host here to a fantasy in which the legendary rôles in the Orpheus legend (one may observe them in their neo-Classic form in Glück's opera) are as much manhandled by Williams as Val is finally manhandled by the local tribe of male brutes. (They proxy for the lascivious Bacchantes who tore Orpheus to pieces because he refused to join their orgies.) Val is forced by firehoses into a holocaust that does not exist in the play, and thus is ironically "burned down" himself in the way that he has boasted of "burning a woman down." The impolite inquirer might stumble on some curious implications in this fate of Val's: implications far more staggering than the film's more stock type of innuendo —as when Lady (Anna Magnani as the unhappy married storekeeper who hires Val and sleeps with him) refers casually and drily to his proud myths about his "physical functions." Val's incidental addiction to playing a guitar is, in the most reasonably available sense, simply his refuge from his own sexual hypocrisy, and ostensibly also the sublimation of his distaste for *demonstrating* his alleged erotic endurance. As to "burning a woman down," he specifically tells Lady that he "could," not that he "would." Yet, apparently, for the necessary purposes of Williams-type drama, he *does.*

In the play, he is philosophically reconciled to obeying the sheriff's order to get out of town; at this point he tries to convince the much-smit-

Big-screen passions—Marlon Brando and Anna Magnani in THE FUGITIVE KIND.

ten Lady, who has tasted his prowess, that he *is,* after all, the "fugitive kind." In the movie, though not in the play, her remonstrances prevail enough to make him urge her to join him after he crosses the state line. Of course, he never even gets near that line, for he and Lady must both be killed in the catastrophe that Williams has devised to conform with the legendary tragedy. But anyone who knows that tragedy, can measure how far astray Williams has wandered into his cultural cornfield.

Williams might object that he meant, vehemently and precisely, all his distortions of the legend. To some of the informed, the intentionality of the displacements may be too, too obvious. In the apotheosis that Williams has supplied, the declassée nymph of the region, functioning as a cheated Bacchante who longs for Val-Orpheus, fondles his snakeskin jacket and poetizes while the Conjure Man (Death) mutely stands by. Would the playwright concede that this apotheosis fails to justify the Orphic doctrine that earthly music must copy the music of the spheres in order to send the soul on its immortal way among the paths of earth and heaven?

This point of the schoolboy's legend and the opera's romance (as well as Balanchine's recent ballet) must, in the nature of things, escape most of the mass audience. Whether it did or did not escape Williams, he remains answerable to it. The best one might say for his "Orphism" is that Val (at least this is clear in the *play*) values his guitar above Lady and that his cool version of Elvis Presley, inverting that notable orgiast's effect on the sexually impressionable, apparently tends to pacify the "Bacchic" in both sexes. But major art—and one cannot avoid remarking *this* intention of Williams—does not celebrate the degeneration of a great human motif such as the ultimate sublimity attainable by love through music. Orpheus' tragedy is that he cannot dissociate his physical love for his dead wife from the ideal plane of its musical coefficient, the magic of his lyre, and therefore, wanting her back from death in her fleshly form, he must be taught the great lesson that is the essence of Orphic religion: the soul, in its eternal life, must die to the flesh over and over (even as the flesh "dies" again and again in the act of sex) and that lovers are reconciled to this by putting their faith in the ceaseless "music of the spheres," of which the passing music of earthly instruments is a mere magical emulation. In other words, sometime, somewhere, through heavenly harmony, lovers will be reunited after death.

In view of this tradition, the impressive scarcity in the movie of Val's guitar music, as visibly played and sung to, might be interpreted as a creditable act of discretion. But such discretion, even granted the peculiar aims of this work of Orphic revivalism, is still a matter of very questionable judgment. For if the power of Val's music is not present, the immediacy of the musical spell (the Orphic enchantment) is missing, and so the real heart of Val's "Orphic" magic has to be inferred from his own, ambiguous rationalization of himself. Unhappily, this rationalization, far from being Orphic in spirit, is the wistful, home-grown compensation of a modern, jazz-traumatized schizoid. . . . I am afraid that the enlightened among us can conclude but one thing: that even as a "descending" Orpheus, Val (Snakeskin) Xavier is an impostor delegated by Tennessee Williams to deceive—rather than *un*deceive as a true Orpheus would—everybody with whom he comes in contact in his story . . . and that means its author, too.—PARKER TYLER

Wild River

Produced and directed by Elia Kazan. Screenplay: Paul Osborne (based on novels by William Bradford Huie and Borden Deal). Music: Kenyon Hopkins. Photography: Ellsworth Fredericks. Editor: William Reynolds. With Montgomery Clift, Lee Remick, Jo Van Fleet. 20th Century–Fox.

Considering the abundance of good story material for the screen contained in the social issues of the day, surprisingly few American films have tackled the public problems from which spring the personal dramas. Of the occasional ventures into this area Elia Kazan's have been among the best—for instance, *On the Waterfront*, *Panic in the Streets* and *A Face in the Crowd*, films which grew out of "documentary" materials and drew the private story from a wider social context. And now with *Wild River* Kazan explores a community issue and the private sorrows stemming from it.

The subject is the Tennessee Valley Authority in its beginnings in the early 'thirties. The story of the taming of a river is such obvious dramatic material for film that the only wonder is it has not been used numbers of times since Pare Lorentz' *The River*. In Kazan's film the subject gives rise to a moral issue that is the surest stuff of tragedy: two rights clashing head on make a wrong. Here is the archetypal conflict of the state versus the individual that we find in *Antigone*: community need (the irresistible force) against personal conscience (the immovable object).

Jo Van Fleet in WILD RIVER.

Montgomery Clift as Chuck Glover is sent by the TVA to persuade Ella Garth to sell her island in the river before the agency closes the new dam and floods her out. Ella, movingly played by Jo Van Fleet, resists this threatened invasion of her property with a determined stand for the rights of the individual. The government's purpose is admittedly good—to control a destructive river and to provide cheap power for the inhabitants of the region. But Progress has a way of hurting while helping; with benevolence there is also tyranny. In the face of social necessity Ella Garth fights for those things which matter most to the individual: her identity, her roots, and her dignity.

Avoiding false heroics and resisting the sentimental appeals inherent in the material, Jo Van Fleet makes the defeat of this woman in the face of the inevitable a performance to be cherished. When Ella Garth is most alone, deserted even by her indolent sons, she is most magnificent and most understanding of her enemy, the government man Chuck Glover. In her loneliness she can sense also the loneliness of a man who must perform an unpleasant duty.

Clift as the TVA man must represent the impersonal role of state benefactor caught between the pressures of bureaucracy and personal interests. Faced with his opponent's dignity, Clift's official determination must be modified and humanized. This happens to a limited extent through Clift's "cool" way of playing, but the story sidetracks him from the central issue by making him fall in love with Ella's granddaughter (Lee Remick). It is an evasion that makes for clutter. A film excellent in many ways is wrenched out of shape by a

love story that gets more space than it merits.

More pertinent to the main struggle and in keeping with the scope of social drama is the introduction of the racial issue. Clift entices Ella's Negro farmhands to jobs with the TVA. They are assigned to tasks beside whites and at the same pay. The community, already disrupted and bewildered by depression, government relief projects, and the crush of history, becomes a confused mass of outraged bigotry. A leering group of opportunists lead a mob aroused to a lynch mood. Clift is beaten up while a sheriff and his deputy look on with amused detachment. When Lee Remick is thrown down into the mud, there are some foolish, limp protests from the crowd, momentarily indignant about the mistreatment of a lady. The scene as a whole creates a nightmare experience mixing terror with absurdity.

Kazan has a talent for achieving poetic statement from even the most accidental naturalistic detail. The idle, uncomprehending stare of an old woman in a cheap hotel lobby becomes a powerful image. Again, as in *Panic in the Streets*, *Baby Doll*, or *A Face in the Crowd*, the camera explores scenes in a wonderful old-fashioned way to provide a rich environment for the immediate drama. Kazan recalls the depression years with poetic swiftness through a fleeting look at a WPA sign, a picture of Roosevelt, or a 'group of hotel residents gathered in the lobby at night to listen to the radio. Scraps of songs from the 'thirties or a giggling desk clerk quoting the comic tags of the day—"Wanna buy a duck?" and "Vas you dere, Sharlie?"—are at once documentary and intensely theatrical in impact.

Finally, Kazan's pictorial sense is magical: fishermen at the river, golden sunlight on dark branches or dried stalks in the field, and mist over the water are among the fine things in this good film marred only by a misshapen story. The credits reveal that Paul Osborne's screenplay is based on *novels* by William Bradford Huie and Borden Deal, and Osborne may have provided additional material. This probably accounts for the story's lack of unity.

—HENRY GOODMAN

Tiger Bay

Director: J. Lee Thompson. Producer: Julian Wintle-Leslie. Script: John Hawkesworth and Shelly Smith. Music: Laurie Johnson. A Parkyn Production, released by Rank. With Hayley Mills, John Mills, Horst Buchholz.

Tiger Bay opens, with a documentary air, on a group of seamen being paid off in Cardiff after a voyage. One, a sometime poet, is followed to a rooming house where he finds that his lady friend, Polish like himself, has skipped—notwithstanding the good wishes and monthly checks he had been sending her. He locates her nearby, on the way fatefully making the acquaintance of a certain neighborhood tomboy. In the ensuing argument he loses control for one agonizing moment and shoots his mistress with her lover's gun, which she has taken from a drawer.

Gilly, the little girl, lives parentless with an aunt in the same building. A delightful child filled with somewhat defiant mischief and curiosity, she witnesses the shooting through the letter-slot, and picks up the gun when the man hides it. He pursues her—to a church where she sings blithely in the choir. But out of their mutual terror arises a strange tenderness and understanding. Planning to ship out the next day, he first promises to take her with him, but later realizes the impracticality of it, to Gilly's dismay. The development of the relationship between the two odd misfits, the ruses the girl uses to distract the police, the suspense of the detective's false suspicions giving way to accurate ones, are all nicely handled, making for a curious, diverting blend of comedy, irony, and concern with the dignity and limits of man.

Where the film is at its most charming is in scenes which are out of the established rhythm and tone: the overnight trek to near-by hills and the growing endearment of the pair the next morning as they play and carouse, the girl's melodramatic enactment of the murder for the police while pretending someone else is the culprit. It is least convincing in the opening scenes, both prior to and during the murder. Accepting what follows is like reading on in an

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essay whose basic premise one finds unacceptable, yet with a closing that ultimately provokes acceptance. There are, as usual, loose ends: do even highly emotional persons leave bags behind in boarding houses? It leads here to unnecessary scenes with the new inhabitant of the girl friend's old room—a siren here mostly for glamor. And would a child's testimony be enough to convict in a British court? One doubts it.

But the effect of a fine child actor, as in *The Fallen Idol,* can be extraordinary. In this film young Hayley Mills, daughter of John Mills who plays the police inspector expertly, does a truly superb job of conveying the girl's precarious position—the confusion of loyalties, the lying as at least partly a game, and her real motives in keeping the gun and identifying the wrong man (the gun was to be her means of entering playmates' cowboy games; the mistress' lover was a symbol of a special lack of real understanding and affection among adults). Horst Buchholz gives a fair account of the young Pole, needing a bit more character delineation at times, but rising to the demands of the tighter places. All the scenes between Miss Mills and her father and many with Buchholz were gems of interplay.

All in all, *Tiger Bay* is an unusual entertainment film. It accurately details a tenement district's realities and its point of view is firm, even in switching from the girl to the murderer when they're separate. The climax is a twister: Gilly falls off a ship on which the Pole is about to escape, with the help of a Latin captain and Gilly's refusal to identify him. Our man dives in to save Gilly, knowing that the British police-boat will move in to carry him back inside the three-mile limit. The brave and foolhardy Pole is murderer and hero; the inspector is justified but unjust, and in the end acts illegally himself; Gilly is loyal to her friend and subversive to the law. Out of the conflict of their best motives comes something that, in its perhaps small but solid and contemporary way, one recognizes as tragedy.—Norman C. Moser

TIGER BAY:
Horst Buchholz and Hayley Mills

A Lesson in Love

Director: Ingmar Bergman. Script: Ingmar Bergman. Camera: Martin Bodin. Music: Dag Wirén. Décor: P. A. Lundgren. Svensk Filmindustri. U.S. distributor: Janus. With Eva Dahlbeck, Gunnar Björnstrand, Xonne Lombard, Harriet Anderson, Ake Grönberg.

This 1954 comedy finds Bergman doing a turn as Ernst Lubitsch, with a few epigrammatic flourishes à la René Clair. Except for some gifted clowning by Eva Dahlbeck, it is not very funny. It entertains by the number of elegant variations it makes on a favorite Bergman theme, the psychology of marriage, but its levity is severely qualified by intimations of anguish that challenge the spectator to deeper reflection than Bergman's tinselly resolution would seem to provoke. "This is a comedy that might have been a tragedy," a voice tells us at the outset, and the tone of didacticism that distinguishes the world's most determinedly didactic director is maintained until the ending, when the film fades out on an image of mingled absurdity and beneficence: the literal, toddling appearance of Eros himself in the hotel suite of the

essay whose basic premise one finds unacceptable, yet with a closing that ultimately provokes acceptance. There are, as usual, loose ends: do even highly emotional persons leave bags behind in boarding houses? It leads here to unnecessary scenes with the new inhabitant of the girl friend's old room—a siren here mostly for glamor. And would a child's testimony be enough to convict in a British court? One doubts it.

But the effect of a fine child actor, as in *The Fallen Idol,* can be extraordinary. In this film young Hayley Mills, daughter of John Mills who plays the police inspector expertly, does a truly superb job of conveying the girl's precarious position—the confusion of loyalties, the lying as at least partly a game, and her real motives in keeping the gun and identifying the wrong man (the gun was to be her means of entering playmates' cowboy games; the mistress' lover was a symbol of a special lack of real understanding and affection among adults). Horst Buchholz gives a fair account of the young Pole, needing a bit more character delineation at times, but rising to the demands of the tighter places. All the scenes between Miss Mills and her father and many with Buchholz were gems of interplay.

All in all, *Tiger Bay* is an unusual entertainment film. It accurately details a tenement district's realities and its point of view is firm, even in switching from the girl to the murderer when they're separate. The climax is a twister: Gilly falls off a ship on which the Pole is about to escape, with the help of a Latin captain and Gilly's refusal to identify him. Our man dives in to save Gilly, knowing that the British police-boat will move in to carry him back inside the three-mile limit. The brave and foolhardy Pole is murderer and hero; the inspector is justified but unjust, and in the end acts illegally himself; Gilly is loyal to her friend and subversive to the law. Out of the conflict of their best motives comes something that, in its perhaps small but solid and contemporary way, one recognizes as tragedy.—Norman C. Moser

TIGER BAY:
Horst Buchholz and Hayley Mills

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reunited couple. That Bergman chooses to invoke this deliberately clumsy *deus ex* Room Service to preside over the healing of a modern marriage illustrates the level of inspired banality he is willing to cultivate, either as a heavy-handed imitation of the Lubitsch "touch" or, more probably, as an exact measure of his despair of a solution. Clichés are stretched until they nearly turn inside out. As "solutions," the pairing off of lovers in *Smiles of a Summer Night,* the royal summons in *The Magician,* are benignly trite propositions subtly mocked by implications of tragic doubt. Each positive proposes its own negative.

This interpretation will seem unduly labored unless you have seen all along in Bergman's comedies the mind of a moralist at work. Here the lesson he wants to teach is aimed at the audience. It concerns a happy couple who, in their sixteenth year of marriage, decide to be dissatisfied. See how they run, Bergman seems to say, and the film is an undignified romp broken by periods of articulate analysis and meditation. The husband, a gynecologist, has entered upon an affair, prepared to have it mean no more to his wife and mistress than it does to him. By the time he breaks it off with the mistress, who snorts that, for a gynecologist, he doesn't know anything about women, his wife has retaliated by resuming relations with her old lover. Since the husband and wife, for all the discomposing truths revealed during their alienation, apparently need do nothing more to save their marriage than revive the old strategies of seduction, the game is played out in a few wily skirmishes and ends in victory for both. But the victory that is celebrated, like the lesson that is taught, is surely the ultimate in moral fatuity: the coated pill becomes almost pure sugar.

The film contains enough of the familiar Bergman situations and alignments to make it seem slightly *déjà vu* to initiates. The sexual wrangling prefigures *Smiles of a Summer Night,* and the flashback technique, with a whole leisurely episode given to family portraits and enraptured dreaming on the past, foreshadows *Wild Strawberries.* This episode, recalled by the estranged couple in their train compartment, is in Bergman's most appealing vein of romantic realism. An old man serenaded on his birthday, a family outing in the country, intimacies under the trees—these glimpses of unstrained cordiality constitute a vision of the good life which Bergman seems to find essentially and endearingly nonsensical, just as he seems to have intended the presence of an elderly couple and their married life of gently inane pressures and philosophical complaisance to be understood as a sort of model for the sophisticated younger generation. The comic nonsense of these scenes, lucid and humane, provides a bitter emotional contrast with the artificiality and fanged exchanges of the film's "present tense," and a more deeply disturbing stylistic contrast with the far more opaque and exploitative nonsense of farcical conventions, which carry the film through to its finish. It is a tribute to the professional skill of Dahlbeck and Björnstrand that they are able to play so convincingly within these two styles of comic realization, being in the one fully exposed characters and in the other efficient agents of farce. Whether Bergman here, as in many of his other films, is in two minds about his subject, and whether he is intentionally so or not, never seems to trouble these marvelous actors of his. They play cheerfully across all lines and shadings of conflict in the knowledge, no doubt, that for their director conflict is the law of life and that, even when he is whipping up froth, it will not let him alone.—ARLENE CROCE

The Savage Eye

A film by Ben Maddow, Sidney Meyers, Joseph Strick. Technical adviser: Irving Lerner. Photography: Helen Levitt, Haskell Wexler, Jack Couffer. Music: Leonard Rosenman.

One upon a time a man named Joseph Strick went to see Irving Lerner. He wanted to learn how to make movies. He got a camera and went to Santa Monica with it. The resulting footage, with Lerner's help, became the film *Muscle Beach.* After the success of this little film Strick

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began to think ahead. Luckily he had money: Strick is a very wealthy and intelligent businessman who owns a controlling interest in several large electronic corporations. Making films is both a business and a hobby with him. In either case his money supports his determination to make films, and it made possible a new collaboration. This time it would be the production of a scathing documentary on the city of Los Angeles, collaborating with Ben Maddow and Sidney Meyers. (Irving Lerner was also part of the original group but left in the middle of production after he became involved in other work.)

The Savage Eye was begun four or five years ago when Strick went to Maddow and asked him if he had a script. Maddow replied that both he and Lerner had often talked of doing a film on the prints of Hogarth, but Strick was opposed to art-films as such, considering them "anticinematic." Then they conjectured on the possibility of making a film which would do for a modern city what Hogarth had done for the London of his time.

"When we started out we had an acid eye," says Maddow, "but the things we were photographing began to move us."

Whether or not the men behind the cameras were inspired by the original Hogarth theme is unimportant: they were very angry men. They did not like what they saw and expressed little compassion for the human beings they photographed. The scenes were scattered looks at the city. Whatever attracted the eye was photographed, and there was one dominating quality to it all—it was detached and had a hard, objective, newsreel quality; it was sensational and occasionally bordered on the perverse.

"Slowly," says Maddow, "we evolved the situation for the film—a woman is lonely, seeing Los Angeles (it could have been any modern city) for the first time. She is just divorced and spending the first year of her divorce in the city. We see the city through her eyes. I remembered an issue of Harriman's *Krazy Kat*, 'Do my eye deceive me or do I deceive my eye?' "

The older, Hogarth idea was dropped. And this became the important theme—to look at the world through the subjective eyes of an angry and unhappy woman. By this device they hoped to rationalize their "acid" vision. An actress, Barbara Baxley, was chosen to play the divorcee. She was well cast in this part and gave an excellent performance. Her scenes were intercut with the documentary footage to give the film a story and continuity.

Before long many other people were involved in the production. During the years the film was in the making, photography was contributed by such people as Haskell Wexler (cameraman for Irving Kerschner on *Stake-Out on Dope Street*), Helen Levitt (a well-known still photographer who, along with Sidney Meyers, made *The Quiet One*), and Max Yavnow (a still photographer, responsible for a book of photographs on Los Angeles). There is a long list of photography credits, although Strick, who takes no credit, is responsible for about half the camera work.

In its final form the film follows this line:

A woman, tending toward middle age, is seen arriving at an airport. A man's voice is heard over the action, asking questions of our heroine. The voice is that of some sort of poet, speaking in a curious mixture of epigrams, parables, and platitudes in blank verse. The voice of our heroine begins to answer and we find out that she is "Judith X." The camera cuts away from her to reveal groups of people who are embracing and hugging each other. As we see these fragments of reunion we hear her voice: "The touch of human skin makes me sick!" This line serves very well to introduce us to her state of mind.

Soon we discover that the man's voice is coming from inside her brain. He officially introduces himself to her (for the first time, apparently) as her "vile dreamer, conscience, ghost." This hour-long duologue between psyche and guardian angel is the basic device used to give a poetic unity to the film. It reveals that she is divorced and in the throes of self-pity, hating life and herself. But luckily for her the angel is always at hand—prodding, encouraging, explaining.

In the meantime she continues to wander about the town, searching for distraction and solace. The camera also begins to wander. It takes excursions into the Los Angeles purgatory, giving us sensational little cameos. We see a girl get a "nose job." The doctor slowly crushes bones and we move in close as the music is dialed up. Then we go to a beauty parlor. Next, a reducing salon where we have an opportunity to watch the rear end of an overweight woman as she is rhythmically contorted on an exercycle. Then a jaunt to a pet cemetery and a quick look at some sad old women and dead dogs.

Judith meets a man. She finds him revolting (so will the audience) but she is lost and lonely, so they pass time together. We follow them to the wrestling matches where we see among other things an angry young man in the audience giving the finger to Gorgeous George. We also watch George and other anonymous blobs of flesh as they pounce upon each other. We hear her voice over the roar of the crowds, making analogies between the goons with greasy stomachs who are squeezing each other and her own sexual experiences. Then we find Miss X and her man at a burlesque show watching a strip-tease. At the conclusion of this scene (one of the best-handled in the film), we move to a New Year's Eve party, where Judith describes the partygoers as "pigs with clothes on." After the New Year's party the man she can't stand takes her home and gets into bed with her. The "vile dreamer" asks her about this episode and she tells him that she just "turned off the key in my head . . . it was all mechanical." In the morning the sky smells "of cigars and coffins" and she feels guilty. She takes a shower twice, washes the ashtrays and her car. The purge fails and in a fit of near-hysteria she races out onto the freeways in her Cadillac convertible to seek relief. We follow her to a crackpot evangelist–faith healer and then back again to the highways where she crashes her car. Being near death she is given a blood transfusion. With the help of the guardian angel she is made to see the error of her ways. The blood donors are shown to the audience. They are described as "lovers without names." We hear her voice as she lies in the oxygen tent: "You, I love you . . . poet . . . paranoid . . . hooker . . . boxer . . . homeless man . . . I love you." In her mind this exchange of blood becomes the ultimate symbol of man's love for his fellow man.

The cloud lifts. The nightmare ends. Her old reality is a thing of the past. She has a dream: "I dream of resurrection in a party dress." With MGM-style surrealism we follow her as she runs out of the hospital in her party dress, saying "I must follow my dream."

Suddenly and quite inexplicably we are at a homosexual party. Men "in drag" (masquerading as women) dance and parade. Now, for some reason, our heroine is faced with a dilemma. She must decide between "sleep and the abyss or the shock of the living sea." We cut to a long shot of the surf rolling in over the pilings at Ocean Park pier. Then we see a dime-store doll propped up in the surf, and children playing. The vile dreamer is now asking her new questions: "the arsonist . . . maniac . . . rapist . . . self-made saint . . . do you love them?" Of course she does and the audience at last discovers that life is not so bad after all. All men are "secret lovers of one another," with the same blood. Self-hate vanishes and things begin to look clean and healthy. The guardian angel is right there too, asking her to tell him what she is seeing now. What she is seeing is a long shot of a beach, littered with beer cans. In the distance a young couple is walking. Judith says, "Listen, do you hear them? They are far away . . .

" 'What were you thinking about?' asks the boy.

" 'When do you mean?' answers the girl.

" '*You* know when!' he says.

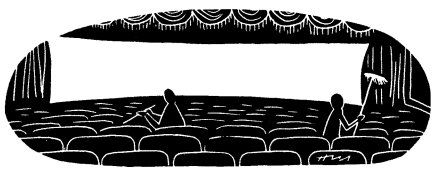
" 'Oh, *then*. . . . I was thinking of roses,' she says . . ."

"Amen," says the vile dreamer and two doves fly away into the setting sun.

One is supposed to conclude that Judith has matured. Now, instead of thinking that love-making is like a wrestling match, she has visions of roses. A girl who thinks of flowers during intercourse would be odd, to say the least. But

more important is the fact that a childish and superficial solution is conjured up, as if all that went before was only temporary and accidental. The idea of a woman who does not find human understanding and love through direct contact with other human beings, but only through the indirect, anonymous process of paid blood donation, is a chilling one. I think the film-makers obviously miss the sociopathic elements of their happy ending.

The Savage Eye is an enigma. It seems as if the film might have been planned in a neo-Brechtian fashion for the purpose of creating riddles in the mind. It is deceptive because of its imbalance. The fragments of documentary film in themselves are bitterly sure-footed. They show us clearly the irresolute and pernicious side of modern American life. Personally, I would like very much to see this footage combined into another form, without the contrived story and dialogue. In general, one can only conclude reluctantly that the film-makers stood short of emotional and intellectual conviction, or else that their motive was cloudy.



It is my understanding that Ben Maddow is primarily responsible for the writing of this film. He is an able screenwriter (*Asphalt Jungle, Intruder in the Dust, Steps of Age*), but one wonders what he was trying to do here. Without a doubt Maddow's creation, the "vile dreamer," is one of the strangest screen characters Hollywood has yet produced. His origins must lie in the netherworld of Hollywood psychology. He is a very disturbing fellow, indeed. At one point he describes human beings as "spasmodically hungry at both ends"; later, "on the sixth day, out of dust, garbage, and alcohol, God created man." Then, when Miss X mentions something about not wanting to look at the sickness of humanity, he begins to shout, "NO! I want you to feel their agony of comprehension." There are a few other lines of the poetic narration which stuck in my memory: "Masturbation by proxy . . . the sin of loveless love," or "the only obscenity is death." One gets the idea that Maddow must have used this film to dispose of all the angry, unrelated, and contradictory thoughts he has ever had. The narration is a string of personal metaphors and profanities, and its total effect is one of detraction.

Thematically, the film is concerned only with the nightmarish aspects of Los Angeles. Los Angeles cannot be called a beautiful city in any sense of the word. It has a large proportion of noxious byways and disillusioned people. A first visitor to southern California is always struck by Pet Haven Cemetery, Clifton's Cafeteria, or the cultists of all kinds who contribute to a special brand of madness known nowhere else in the world. But by concentrating on these fringe areas *The Savage Eye* gave itself over to exaggeration and editorial distortion. The film-makers seemed unable to accept their own lop-sided vision, and their choice of ending betrays them. The "up-beat" ending seems to be an attempt to return to some reality, within the context of the film, for both the film-makers and for their heroine. But since there was very little understanding of Miss X in their minds, the up-beat could only be artificial. A Horatio Alger treatment always comes as a substitute for genuine feelings.

But in final fairness, it must be mentioned that in spite of its over-all failure, *The Savage Eye* accomplishes much of what it sets out to do. There are a number of scenes which are memorable because of their terrifying clarity. The view we get of the wrestling matches and the mobs who are in attendance is an awesome one. We are shown a swirling miasma of howling human beings, each one intent on the puffy, mindless giants who are bounding and bouncing together on the mat. The camera pans slowly about and we get a long, close look at these people. Equally upsetting are the scenes taken inside a burlesque house. I have never seen a strip-tease as honestly treated in any film.

The outstanding scene, in my opinion, is the one inside the temple of a downtown faith-

healer. Lost and unhappy women are lined up for their chance to be touched and healed by the magic of a pale, business-suited charlatan. The scene is held for what seems a very long time, as if to make more anguishing the repetitious nature of the action, the lifeless, hypocritical incantations of the healer, and the sobs of the women.

The film might well have ended with this scene. It seems to sum up the black undercurrents of American life. But, of course, even more upsetting than the footage itself are the implications which must be drawn from what we have seen. We want to understand the reasons behind the desperation and anxiety of these human beings. We have been shown a world populated by adults who never grew up, and it would be nice to learn something about them.

Why does an artist seek out the sordid, the lost, and the unhappy? The search starts first, I believe, with an idealistic inability to accept the status quo. It is a justifiable reaction to an artificial image: a response to the big lie which society constantly poses. It becomes an attempt to understand reality by searching out opposites and extremes. It is also part of the desire to change things. But often the reaction is violent and not well thought out, so we find the tendencies to caricature and romanticize leading ultimately to a new untruth. It is an artistic tragedy when feelings and ideas cannot come together in the work. *The Savage Eye* is only a partially realized work. It is an object lesson on the importance of cohesion, conviction, and certainty—the certainty Marx described when he affirmed, "Every one of your relations to man, and to nature, must be a definite manifestation of your real individual life, corresponding to the object of your will."—BENJAMIN T. JACKSON

Films of Shirley Clarke

Bridges-Go-Round. By Shirley Clarke from footage shot by Bert and Shirley Clarke for films to be shown at the Brussels Festival. Music: Teo Macero.

Skyscraper. Made by Shirley Clarke in collaboration with Willard Van Dyke and Irving Jacoby. Music: Teo Macero. Lyrics: Shelton.

A Scary Time. Made by Shirley Clarke in collaboration with Robert Hughes. Sponsored by UNICEF. Music: Peggy Glanville-Hicks.

Shirley Clarke was originally a dancer. Before making films she took the precaution of learning a great deal about film technique; but she remains an instinctual film-maker, whose feeling for movement generally seems to have carried over into her feeling for the camera.

The theme of *Bridges-Go-Round*—as far as words can describe it—is the bridges that link Manhattan to Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and the New Jersey shore. In actuality, the bridges become plastic materials for a highly abstract subjective study in structures and movements. The images were printed "bi-packed"—running sandwiched together through the printer—in order to give them equal intensity. They are manipulated in a complex but extremely arresting way: the great steel girders, the taut cables, the towers and railings and roadways and abutments seem almost to dance. An exciting sense of color works with Mrs. Clarke's lively rhythmic sense.

One particularly striking shot in *Bridges* is a zoom backward from an automobile moving forward—so that the bridge pillars remain in place but light poles on the periphery of the screen whizz past. The shot effectively confuses one's ordinary sense of depth perception, and creates a new kind of dynamic and realist equivalent of the stage designer's forced perspective.

On its simplest level *Skyscraper* is the chronicle of a building, 666 Fifth Avenue, from the time its site is cleared (in New York one must tear down a used building to build a new one) to its ultimate employment as a forty-odd-floor stack of offices. But the film is also a comment on the contrast between the nobility and quietly unconscious heroism of the actual construction workers and the shallow, highly polished routinism for which their labor provides a home. The construction sequences are shot in black and white, but the use sequences go to a kind of neon-red argon-blue Eastmancolor.

The futility of the whole business is suggested by a final long shot of the building: someone has

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The futility of the whole business is suggested by a final long shot of the building: someone has

suggested that it looks like an enormous square bottle of clear blue underarm deodorant. In addition, one might suspect that beneath the genial sound track lies a hint that the construction methods themselves, caught as they are in what used to be called "the cash nexus," show in their clock-punching unhumanity a kind of parallel to the unhuman fate of the building itself.

As in *Bridges,* there is an astonishing lyric quality, even when dealing with mechanical processes. Not only are the shots edited dynamically (there is almost no matched-action photography in the film) but the changes in tempo, the pauses, accelerations, retards, and even visual glissandos—such as a shot looking up an elevator shaft as the elevator ascends—work with a remarkably complex correctness and grace. One is tempted to suggest that, like jazz, *Skyscraper* simply "swings."

The sound treatment consists of off-screen dialogue by the workers and a narration in song. One must also comment on the neat and sometimes terrifying camerawork in the high steel by Kevin Smith—no acrophobe he.

A Scary Time, done with Robert Hughes of the UN Film Unit, is as yet unreleased. Dynamic photography and editing are here combined with a kind of movement of ideas. The film deals with the contrast between the mock horror or attempt at horror of American children at Hallowe'en and the actual horror of children's fates elsewhere in the world. The film was made for theatrical distribution, with the purpose of predisposing the uncommitted to support government contributions to UNICEF or to give individual donations. The linkage of Hallowe'en and the American "trick or treat for UNICEF" campaigns is made quite simply by setting the Hallowe'en experience of American kids, who collect for UNICEF and seem to be oblivious to the meaning of what they're up to, against the actual horror engulfing the children whose faces appear on the UNICEF posters. The non-American footage, single frames of which served to illustrate the posters, was carefully culled from various stock-footage libraries. A triumph of the unique patience and editing skill needed to work from stock footage occurs in a rather long montage of dancing and smiling (the result of donation) edited in a crisp and visually sensible style. The score, this time by Peggy Glanville-Hicks, while a bit too mild for some of the pictures, served well. The film itself is a basically honest approach to a real problem. The final shot of a baby, its face covered with flies, held on the screen for a very long time, is not pretty; neither is it easily forgettable. Neither is the need for which the film was made either pretty or easily forgotten.

An example of Kevin Smith's high-steel photography in SKYSCRAPER.

Shirley Clarke is soon to begin her first feature film, an adaptation of the controversial off-Broadway play, *The Connection.* This off-Hollywood venture into the genre of the theatrical film by one of our most talented experimentalists will be awaited with the greatest interest.

—HENRY BREITROSE

Come Back, Africa

Producer-director: Lionel Rogosin. Script: Lionel Rogosin with Lewis N'Kosi and Bloke Modisane. Photography: Emil Knebel and Ernst Artaria. Sound: Walter Wettler. Editor: Carl Lerner. Music Editor: Lucy Brown, Cast: Zachariah, Vinah, Arnold, Aunty, Dube-Dube, Eddy, George, Marumu, Miriam, Morris, Myrtle, Rams, Steven, and the people of Johannesburg.

suggested that it looks like an enormous square bottle of clear blue underarm deodorant. In addition, one might suspect that beneath the genial sound track lies a hint that the construction methods themselves, caught as they are in what used to be called "the cash nexus," show in their clock-punching unhumanity a kind of parallel to the unhuman fate of the building itself.

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Zachariah's false arrest in COME BACK, AFRICA.

Come Back, Africa, shot in Johannesburg by the American film-maker Lionel Rogosin (*On the Bowery, Out*), furnishes the world with a report on the *apartheid* social order which cannot help having significance at this time.

The film's chief merits lie in its documentary comment: in its vivid picture of the mining company's robot-training of the new men; in its lamp-lit processional through dark subterranean corridors with the miners braced taut against their drills; in its long shots of mountained tailings and the impersonal city towers looming remote beyond; in its spectacle of a joyless élite watching a ragamuffin band of penny-whistle virtuosos; in the vigor of Negro ceremony, dance, and song against a setting of shanty lands and can-littered dumps.

When Rogosin turns from this powerful reality, which serves to introduce and pace his story, to a dramatization of its effects upon Zachariah, a young migrant from a Zulu reserve, *Come Back, Africa* is weakened both as film and as argument. Zachariah is a sympathetic character, of transparent personal integrity. His misfortunes are many: repeated firings and consequent domestic crises, an assault, a false arrest, and finally the murder of his wife at the hands of a *tsotsi* thug. Although drawn from the true experience of the African, these events are banally conceived and become melodramatic. It is deplorable, for example, that Zachariah's love for his wife should be pictured in Hollywood's standard images of passion.

Shallowness is another failing of the dramatized sequences. From Zachariah's dismissal for incompetence through the gratuitous death of his wife, the film barely touches the unique aspects of *apartheid* life. The pass system, the effect of the Group Areas Act, the curfew, the Negro hostility to liberal whites, all find expression in talk alone. Only one shot—the prophetic closing image of Zachariah's pounding rage—speaks with the force and eloquence which might have characterized the entire film had it been made, for example, by an African Negro working with his fellows or by an outsider bringing to the scene a deep understanding of the film medium.

As sheer argument or appeal, the story carries a further handicap in the "controlled, spontaneous dialogue" of Rogosin's direction. The experimental use of conversational dialogue is laudable in every way, and is almost certain to be the major preoccupation of film-makers in the coming decade. But even a skilled actor would be defeated in such scenes as that of Zachariah embarrassedly telling his newly arrived wife that he has lost this job and the next, and has gone through one difficulty after another—all of which the audience has already heard.

There is some truly spontaneous talk in the film, but it calls for greater sensitivity in camera set-ups and editing if its intended significance is not to become confused, lost, or even nullified. This last very nearly happens in one crucial scene. Here we see a group of Negroes engaged in a prolonged discussion of race, politics, art, and the rest of life as they see it. Although many important points are touched upon, the remote and rambling naïvetés in which they are smothered give a portrait of the South African Negro leadership which does disservice to hundreds of men now shut in Verwoerd's jails.

Come Back, Africa shows plainly that semi-direction does not lead inevitably to innocent naturalism. Used here to tell an obvious and heavy-handed story, it results in many painfully cramped and awkward scenes. The effect is innocent, perhaps, but hardly natural. Informality is a way, but not an end in itself.

—ROGER SANDALL AND CECILE STARR

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FROM THE TERRACE. A colorfully ponderous, expensive saga that mixes ingredients from *The Young Philadelphians* and *Peyton Place*. Paul Newman portrays his agate-eyed young man of the world all over again and John O'Hara's novel makes a tiresome film, with only Joanne Woodward, *sans* Southern accent, to enliven it with a visual essay in bitchery.

THE MOUNTAIN ROAD. Alfred Hayes has concocted a jejune fantasy of strife in 1944 China. A group of American soldiers flee the Japanese in a platoon of trucks and jeeps, through treacherous, famine-wracked mountain terrain. James Stewart, mouthing platitudes, is the officer-in-charge, and Lisa Lu is a dignified summa-cum-laude from Radcliffe, an Oriental widow in an occidental mood for love. Daniel Mann's direction is badly placed and dull; it often seems as if all China were being dynamited, and Glenn Corbett, as an ill-fated sergeant, brings the only touch of reality into this nonsense.

PLEASE DON'T EAT THE DAISIES. Adapted from a book of the same title by the wife of Walter Kerr, New York *Herald-Tribune* drama critic, to which a plot has been added involving the shy critic chased by vamp, the panning of a friend's play, and reciprocal undoing of the critic's own bad play. David Niven as the critic is comfortable as a bumptious, good-hearted boob, and Doris Day offers little contrast as a pert, lively boob. With songs.

SUMMER WITH MONIKA. When some of the tumult and the shouting subsides, it may well be noticed that Ingmar Bergman's earlier films possessed a considerable warmth and insight into character. This one is an excellent tragedy of young lovers destroyed by the illusions of an impulsive summer romance. The city of Stockholm is the villain, and Gunnar Fischer's camera handles this with all of the

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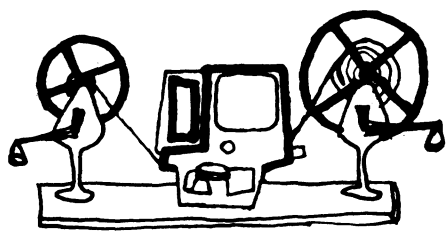

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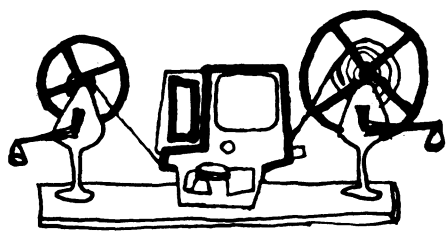

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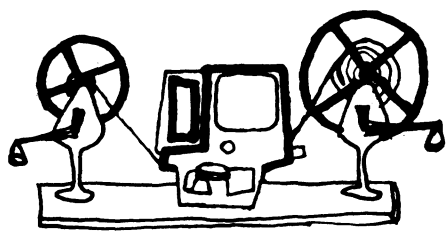

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Production Report

EDITED BY RICHARD GERCKEN

[In this section information will be provided on current production in the United States and abroad, and on items of interest not otherwise dealt with in FILM QUARTERLY. *Each issue's "Production Report" will focus on several countries besides the United States, so that in the course of a year most film-making countries will have been covered—a series of reports by foreign correspondents is in preparation. Werner Zurbuch is our German correspondent; Mr. Gercken prepares the Hollywood coverage.]*

Sweden

Two recent events can be regarded as representative of the film situation in Scandinavia today. The first is the announcement made in February by Sandrew, Sweden's major production company, that a serious and sustained economic crisis in the motion picture industry had forced them to close their studios and merge, on a "free and competitive basis," with Svensk Filmindustri.

The second is the deal signed more recently by Ingmar Bergman to make two pictures (in Sweden) for Paramount.

The closing of the Sandrew studios is the latest and most serious development in a process which started about ten years ago, when the movie industry first felt competition from TV. While 29 Swedish pictures were released in the 1950–51 season, only 13 are scheduled for 1960. In Norway, which has far more limited production opportunities, the same tendencies are obvious.

Consequently, Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish producers have lately turned to the idea of a joint Scandinavian production unit, operating somewhat in the same way as the Scandinavian Airlines System. No date, however, has been set for achieving such an organization

In the meantime, Bergman alone among the Swedish directors has any consistent measure of artistic freedom.

While waiting for the American release of his film *The Virgin Spring* (see Vernon Young's review) we learn of his arrangement with Paramount for the production in 1961 of two English-language pictures. One will be an adaptation of the Albert Camus novel *The Fall*; the second will be an original. Meanwhile Bergman is completing a satiric comedy in a modern setting, *The Devil's Eye*. It is a Don Juan legend with the theme—"A woman's virtue is a mote in the Devil's eye."

Bergman's contract with Paramount could mark a further step towards a new internationalism in Scandinavian film production. There are several other directors who might benefit from such a liberalization—Arne Mattson, Hasse Ekman, Alf Kjellin and Göran Gentele, all deserving an opportunity to work with more significant scripts than their Swedish producers can at present afford to sign them for.

Great things are especially hoped for from Göran Gentele, 36-year-old director of the Royal Stockholm Opera. His most recent film, *The Bedroom Thief*, starring Sweden's leading *jeune premier* Jarl Kulle, has had considerable success in Scandinavia and is a well-executed, intelligent, contemporary comedy.

The Love Play, starring Bibi Andersson and Sven Lindberg, and dealing with a husband's imaginative experiences with four different images of his wife, is regarded as the first mature work of the young director Carl-Henrik Fant.

Subtle, soft and mellow humor is a fundamental quality of the Danish mind, excellently reflected in a new satirical phantasy-farce called *Say It With Prunes*, starring the Swedish actor Alf Kjellin, and directed by Hagen Hasselbalch. Hasselbalch, a documentary filmmaker, now for the first time attempting a full-length feature, mixes Sacha Guitry with Jacques Tati. *Say It With Prunes* has no dialogue—music and sound effects being used exclusively on the track. Starting from the fact that Denmark in the last Olympic Games did not score a single point, but has the world's largest consumption of prunes, Hasselbalch's fairy tale depicts how the happy life of a small prune-consuming town in the country is threatened by TV newsreels, commercials, and modern salesmanship.

Extremely successful in Denmark (although dismissed by the Swedish critics) is Benjamin Christensen's *A Stranger at the Door*. There are only two characters in the film, a woman living in a deserted house among the Jylland dunes and an ex-Nazi who visits her. They have a frenetic affair which reaches its dramatic climax when the woman discovers that her lover was responsible for her husband's death during the war. The love scenes, largely through a penetrating use of the close-up, are frankly described—some think too frankly.

In general, there is more vitality and imagination evident in contemporary Danish films than in the films of their Swedish colleagues—their subjects are less parochial, and are treated with more artistic maturity. And the film-makers are supported by a public which once again has the movie habit.

—OLAF MARNEUS

France

Claude Autant-Lara, already criticized in France for the "directness" of his observations on love in the barnyard in *La Jument Verte* (the Green Mare's Nest) is again being condemned by the critics for his new film *Les Régates de San Francisco*—a study of adolescent love. The subject gave him less trouble in his adaption of Colette's *Le Blé en Herbe*, but his new film has caused a surprising amount of support to be given to the Minister of Justice, M. Michelet, who is said to be in favor of a system of pre-production censorship of all scripts produced by French companies. His plan would also lower the number of film industry representatives on the Censorship Board (they have at present 9 of the 21 places) and replace them with psychologists and educators.

England

Tony Richardson, who directed John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* for the screen, has recently completed filming of a second Osborne play *The Entertainer*. Sir Laurence Olivier repeats his stage role of Archie Rice in the picture, and Brenda de Banzie and Joan Plowright are also in the cast. (See interview with Tony Richardson in this issue.)

Charles Crichton directed *The Battle of the Sexes*, based on James Thurber's short story *The Catbird Seat*. The picture stars Peter Sellers and Robert Morley. *The Battle of the Sexes* and *The Entertainer* are both productions of Britain's new Bryanston Films organization.

Michael Powell's new film *Peeping Tom* has not met with very enthusiastic reception in its early release. It is a horror film about a pathological killer, distinguished by excellent direction and photography which make a rather confused script appear much better than it is.

Hollywood

Fred Zinneman recently completed shooting *The Sundowners* in Australia. The film stars Deborah Kerr, Peter Ustinov, Robert Mitchum, and Glynis

Johns. Warner Brothers has not yet established a release date for the film, which is being completed in London.

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